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# LONGMANS' ENGLISH CLASSICS

EDITED BY

ASHLEY H. THORNDIKE, PH.D., L.H.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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LORD BYRON

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THE FOURTH CANTO OF CHILDE HAROLD

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

AND OTHER POEMS





Longmans' English Classics

BYRON'S  
"FOURTH CANTO OF CHILDE  
HAROLD  
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON  
AND OTHER POEMS

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY

H. E. COBLENTZ, A.M.

PRINCIPAL OF THE SOUTH DIVISION HIGH SCHOOL, MILWAUKEE,  
WISCONSIN



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## INTRODUCTION

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GEORGE GORDON BYRON, the sixth Lord Byron, was born in Halles Street, London, January 22, 1788. His father was John Byron, commonly called "Mad Jack," a captain in the Guards and a very great rascal, who squandered his wife's fortune at the gaming table and then deserted his family; and his mother, Catherine Gordon of Gicht, was a stormy-tempered Scottish heiress of little learning. Both were of ancient and distinguished, but tainted, stock.

The story of Byron's life is a most paradoxical one. There are two distinct sides to it, one good, the other bad. Hence one critic is led to speak of his "splendid and imperishable excellence of sincerity and strength;" and another of his "gaudy charlantry, blare of brass, and big bowwowishness." And both are right, though neither has arrived at the whole truth. The reasons for these contradictory elements in Byron's life, however, are not far to seek. His parentage, his early training, and the circumstances of his boyhood, all tended toward one end—to make him what he was as a man. A knowledge of these leaves little in his irregular conduct to be explained away.

At the age of ten Byron succeeded to the baronial title, and mother and son at once left Aberdeen (Scotland)—whence they had retired, on the desertion of the husband and father, on £150 a year—to take up their residence at

Newstead Abbey, the ancient family seat, near Nottingham. Here they lived unhappily together for a year. Neither seems to have understood the other. Gossip tells how altogether uncertain Mrs. Byron's deportment was; how one moment she would hurl the tongs at the boy's head, or taunt him with his deformity (a sort of club foot) as a "lame brat," and the next almost smother him with caresses; while each, it is said, warned a nearby apothecary not to sell poison to the other. Thus they lived for a year "in a tempest," then the boy was put to school, first at Dulwich, and later (1801) at the famous boys' school at Harrow, where he remained for five years. Perhaps the future poet's most prominent characteristics at this period were his tendency to lord it over his mates—to be first or nothing—his innate opposition to authority, and his propensity for falling in love.

In 1805 Byron entered Trinity College, Cambridge. We quote from Copeland and Rideout: "You must picture him at this time," they write, "as a brilliant, vain, sensitive youngster, whom the Gyp (the man that took care of his rooms) feared as a 'young man of tumultuous passions'; who made several sincere friends, Long, Harness, Matthews, Scrope, Davies, and Hobhouse; who found Cambridge dull and became a harum-scarum undergraduate, sometimes sitting up over champagne and claret till after midnight; who was a good cricketer, rider, boxer, could dive in the Cam and get coins fourteen feet deep, and was an expert shot;" in short, "who did everything, almost, but study;" a picture in the light of Byron's own statement, that he "was always cricketing, rebelling, fighting, and in all manner of mischiefs," certainly not far astray.

But one must not think of Byron's college career as wholly wasted. Two things it did for him worth while:

it gave him a fondness for books, and it stimulated him to poetic utterance. It was in 1807, in his second year at college, that his first serious venture in verse, *Hours of Idleness*, appeared. As poetry it amounted to almost nothing. Almost any schoolboy with a penchant for rhyming, might have done as well. But the sequence was most important. In 1808, just a year after the volume appeared, a savage attack was made upon it in the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron struck back fiercely in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). Biting, and indiscriminate, and often manifestly unjust as this rejoinder was, it had power. No such satire had appeared in England since the days of Pope. All literary London was set by the ears. The writer of *juvenilia* had been stung into becoming a real poet. Early the same year Byron, having come of age, took his seat in the House of Lords; then, after a protracted revel at Newstead, set out on his travels abroad.

It appears that Byron left England with the intention of visiting Persia and India, but if so he changed his plans. Instead, with his friend Hobhouse, he landed at Lisbon, journeyed through Portugal and Spain, and then made his way to Malta and the Ægean countries, where he spent the greater part of two years. There can be no doubt that this visit to the Continent made Byron. The change in scenery, the visits paid to ancient historic shrines, the breaking away from English conventionalities for the life of Southern Europe—the deep impressions all these made upon him—aroused his true poetic genius. In 1811 he returned to England, carrying with him “some four thousand lines of one kind or another,” written during his travels. Among these “four thousand lines” were the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*.

The story of the publication of *Childe Harold* (1812) is a familiar one. All England was taken by storm. In his own threadbare phrase, Byron "awoke one morning and found himself famous." Other poems rapidly followed: *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, the latter written in four days, in 1813; and *The Corsair*, written in ten days: *The Ode to Napoleon*, *Hebrew Melodies*, and *Lara*, in 1814; and the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, in 1815. These works—most of them brilliant, oriental verse-tales—like *Childe Harold*, had an enormous sale. Fourteen thousand copies of *The Corsair* were sold in a single day. In ten years the publisher Murray realized £75,000 from Byron's pen alone. Scott was driven from the field and began to write prose. Byron, to use his own words, had become "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme." All literary and social England was at his feet.

But public adulation for Byron was short-lived. In January, 1815, he married Miss Milbanke, a lady of rank and fortune. Whatever the cause, their marriage was unhappy, and at the end of a year, immediately after the birth of their daughter, Lady Byron went home to her father's house never to return. Now came the reaction. English society, in a spasm of reform, turned upon its idol with fierce criminations. "I was accused of every monstrous vice of public rumor and private rancor," Byron wrote later from Italy. "My name which had been a knightly or a noble one, since my fathers helped conquer the kingdom for William the Norman, was tainted. I felt that if what was whispered, and muttered, and murmured was true, I was unfit for England; if false, England was unfit for me." Smarting under a sense of injustice, he left England (April, 1816) forever. This separation from his wife and departure from his native country marks a stage in



the development of Byron's genius. From this time a new note of power and a depth of feeling heretofore unknown to him are present in his verse.

Landing at Calais, Byron proceeded through Flanders, thence up the Rhine to Switzerland. Here he met the poet Shelley, and under his influence and the spell of the Lake Geneva country, wrote some of his noblest works: most notably, the third canto of *Childe Harold*; and the *Prisoner of Chillon*, included in this volume. From Switzerland he went to Venice (1817), and later to Ravenna (1820). His literary output, during the four years spent at these places, was tremendous. In 1817 he finished *Manfred*, and wrote the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, *The Lament of Tasso* and *Beppo*, the last in the gay, witty and satirical mood, later so successful in *Don Juan*; in 1818 and 1819, the first four cantos of *Don Juan*, the *Ode on Venice* and *Mazeppa*, the last named included in this volume; and in 1820 and 1821, *A Vision of Judgment*, *The Prophecy of Dante*, the five dramas, *Heaven and Earth*, *Cain*, *Sardanapalus*, *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, and a canto or two of *Don Juan*, besides shorter poems. It is safe to say that few other authors have produced so much in so short a time; and this in spite of his excesses, liasons, and debauchery. Later he wrote the dramas, *Werner* and the *Deformed Transformed*, *The Island*, and additional cantos of *Don Juan*.

In 1822 Byron went to Pisa, where, in company with Shelley and Leigh Hunt, he established a journal of revolutionary tendencies, called the *Liberal*; but which came to an abrupt end with the tragic death of Shelley the following year. From Pisa he went to Genoa (1823). The rest is soon told. At Genoa he received overtures from his friends Kinniard and Hobhouse to join the Greeks, then

engaged in their efforts to throw off the Turkish yoke. Always an enthusiastic lover of freedom, he consented. To raise funds he sold Newstead; he hired and provisioned a brig, and in July, 1823, set sail for Cephalaria. The next spring found him at Missolonghi eager for action, straightening out the tangles among the quarreling factions of the Greeks, building fortifications, and planning campaigns. But his health began to give way. Constant exposure to rain and cold brought on a fever. In his delirium he imagined himself on the battlefield, and called upon his Suliotes to follow him. On April 19, 1825, he died at the age of thirty-six. All Greece was plunged in grief. The provisional government decreed that all public offices should be closed, that the nation go in mourning for thirty-one days, and that a salute of thirty-seven guns be fired. His body was taken to England, and, denied a place in Westminster, was buried in the family vault at Hucknall near Newstead.

Byron's place in literature is not easily fixed. On no other author of so great repute, are the critics so divided. That he was the vogue during his lifetime, however, none will dispute. Even his detractors acknowledge his genius—though decrying the man—and recognize the tremendous influence he exerted over the literature of his day, both in England and on the Continent. Indeed, on the Continent he is still held to be the greatest English poet of the century.

Byron's power as a poet lies in the intensity of his appeal to the emotions. His poems are extremely subjective. "He has fecundity, eloquence, and wit," says M. Scherer, "but these qualities are confined within somewhat narrow limits; for he has treated hardly any subject but one—himself." To the extent, then, that he could not, or did not,

lift himself into the realms of impersonal and disinterested verse, Byron was not, in the best sense, a true artist. Other faults pointed out in his poetry are a lack of sincerity, a seeking after oratorical effect, narrowness of imagination, carelessness in rhyme, infelicity in the selection and management of words, slips in grammar, and lack of finish, due in part at least to his rapid composition, but no less inexcusable for all of that.

But for all these faults—and some of them glaring faults—Byron has written much that is poetry of highest quality. *The Dream* and *Darkness*, written shortly after his separation from his wife, are among the most powerful poems in the language; some of the descriptions in *Childe Harold* are unexcelled; his dramas, although on the whole unsuited for the stage, contain many exquisite and intensely dramatic passages; his verse-tales are spirited and full of action; and *Don Juan*, whatever may be thought of its morality, is certainly a masterpiece of satire. Perhaps we could not do better than to close with a few appreciations, in the main favorable, from men of recognized authority. “Byron was a poet then,” says one, “but in his own fashion: a strange fashion, like that in which he lived. There were internal tempests within him, avalanches of ideas, which found issue only in writing.” Goethe, forgetful of himself, says: “Byron is undoubtedly to be regarded as the greatest talent of our century; . . . the English can point to no poet who is his like. He is different from all the rest and, in the main, greater.” Scott, likewise forgetful of his own poetical talents, writes: “As various in composition as Shakespeare, Lord Byron has embraced every topic of human life and sounded every string on the divine harp from its slightest to its most powerful and heart-astounding tones.” “Along with his astounding power and pas-

sion," says Matthew Arnold, "he had a strong and deep sense for what is beautiful in human action and suffering. . . . Nature seems to take the pen from him as she took it from Wordsworth, though in a different fashion." "Byron," says Mr. Swinburne, "who rarely wrote anything either worthless or faultless, can only be judged or appreciated in the mass: the greatest of his works is his whole work taken together." And finally, a statement from the poet himself: "I have written," he says, "from the fulness of my mind, from passion, from impulse, from many motives, but not 'for their sweet voices'. To withdraw myself from myself has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all—and publishing also the continuance of the same object—by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself."

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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THE standard edition of Byron's works, including poems, letters, and journals, is that edited by E. H. Coleridge and R. E. Prothero, and published by John Murray, London. Moore's "Life" (1830), with an edition of the Journals and Letters, is still the standard biography, though open to criticism. Perhaps the best short memoir is by John Nichol in the "English Men of Letters" series. The life by Roden Noel in the "Great Writers" series, has a useful bibliography. Among the best critical essays on Byron are those by Macaulay, Jeffrey, Hazlitt ("Spirit of the Age"), Matthew Arnold ("Essays in Criticism," second series), J. A. Symonds (in Ward's "English Poets"), John Morley ("Miscellanies," vol. I), Paul E. More (*Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1898). For a good account of Byron in connection with the literature of his period, see C. H. Herford's "The Age of Wordsworth."

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(The dates of Byron's Works are the dates of publication,  
not those of writing.)

BYRON'S LIFE AND WORKS.	LITERATURE	BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.
1788. Jan. 22 born.		1789. States General meets at Versailles. French Revolution begins. Fall of the Bastille.
	1790. Burke's <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> .	
	1791. Boswell's <i>Life of Dr. Johnson</i> .	
	1792. Paine's <i>Age of Reason</i> .	1792. Shelley born.
	1794. Ann Radcliffe's <i>Mysteries of Udolpho</i> .	1793. Louis XVI of France executed.
		1794. Robespierre overthrown. Gibbon died.
		1795. Carlyle and Keats born.
		1796. Burns died.
		1797. Burke died.
1798. Succeeds to the Baronial title and goes to live at Newstead.	1798. Wordsworth and Coleridge's <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> .	
		1800. Macaulay born. Cowper died.
		1801. Union of Great Britain and Ireland. John Henry Newman born.
1802-1805. Attends school at Harrow. Enters Cambridge.	1802. Scott's <i>Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border</i> .	1802. Treaty of Amiens.
		1803. War between England and France renewed.
		1804. Hawthorne born.
	1805. Scott's <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i> .	1805. Austerlitz and Trafalgar.

BYRON'S LIFE AND WORKS.	LITERATURE.	BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.
1807. <i>Hours of Idleness.</i>	1807. Lamb's <i>Tales from Shakespeare.</i> Wordsworth's <i>Poems.</i>	1807. Longfellow and Whittier born.
	1808. Scott's <i>Marmion.</i> Goethe's <i>Faust</i> (part 1)	
1809. <i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.</i> Takes seat in House of Lords. Leaves England for travels on the continent.	1809. Irving's <i>Knickerbocker's History of New York.</i>	1809. Mrs. Browning, Tennyson, Darwin, Gladstone, Lincoln, Holmes and Poe born.
1811. Returns to England.	1811. Jane Austen's <i>Sense and Sensibility.</i>	1811. Thackeray born.
1812. <i>Childe Harold</i> (Cantos I and II).		1812. Browning and Dickens born. War between England and America. Napoleon's Russian Campaign.
1813. <i>The Giaour. The Bride of Abydos.</i>	1813. Shelley's <i>Queen Mab.</i> Scott's <i>Rokeby.</i>	
1814. <i>The Corsair. Lara.</i>	1814. Wordsworth's <i>The Excursion.</i> Scott's <i>Waverley.</i>	1814. Congress of Vienna. Washington city burned by British. Treaty of peace between England and America.
1815. January, marries Miss Milbanke. December, birth of daughter. <i>Hebrew Melodies.</i>		1815. Battles of Waterloo and New Orleans.
1816. <i>The Siege of Corinth. Parisina.</i> Separates from his wife; and in April leaves England. June, in Switzerland with Shelley. November in Venice, where he remains for three years. <i>The Prisoner of Chillon. Childe Harold.</i> (Canto III).	1816. Coleridge's <i>Christabel.</i> Shelley's <i>Alastor.</i> Bryant's <i>Thanatopsis.</i>	
1817. <i>Manfred.</i>	1817. Moore's <i>Lalla Rookh.</i> Keats' <i>Poems.</i> Coleridge's <i>Biographia Literaria.</i>	1817. Jane Austen died.
1818. <i>Childe Harold</i> (Canto IV). <i>Beppo. Don Juan</i> begun.	1818. Keats' <i>Endymion.</i> Scott's <i>Rob Roy</i> and <i>The Heart of Midlothian.</i>	

BYRON'S LIFE AND WORKS.	LITERATURE.	BIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.
1819. <i>Mazeppa</i> . <i>Don Juan</i> (Cantos I and II).	1819. Scott's <i>The Bride of Lammermoor</i> . Irving's <i>The Sketch Book</i> .	1819. George Eliot, Kingsley, Ruskin, Froude and Lowell born.
1820. At Ravenna.	1820. Scott's <i>Ivanhoe</i> . Shelley's <i>Prometheus Unbound</i> . Keats' <i>Hyperion</i> .	1820. Tyndall and Herbert Spencer born. George III died. George IV ascends the throne.
1821. Expelled from Ravenna. <i>Don Juan</i> (Cantos III-V). <i>Marino Faliero</i> , <i>Sardanapalus</i> , <i>Two Foscari</i> , <i>Cain</i> , <i>Vision of Judgment</i> . November, in Pisa.	1821. De Quincey's <i>Confessions of an Opium Eater</i> . Scott's <i>Kenilworth</i> . Cooper's <i>The Spy</i> . Shelley's <i>Adonais</i> .	1821. Keats died.
1822. Visited by Leigh Hunt. <i>The Liberal</i> established. July, death of Shelley. <i>Werner</i> .	1822. Irving's <i>Bracebridge Hall</i> . Lamb's <i>Essays of Elia</i> (1822-1823).	1822. Matthew Arnold born. Shelley died.
1823. <i>Heaven and Earth</i> <i>Don Juan</i> (Cantos VI-XIV. Sails from Genoa for Greece in July.	1823. Scott's <i>Quentin Durward</i> . Cooper's <i>The Pioneers</i> .	
1824. <i>Don Juan</i> (Cantos XV-XVI). Death at Missolonghi, April 19.	1824. Scott's <i>Redgauntlet</i> .	



CHILDE HAROLD  
CANTO IV  
THE PRISONER OF CHILLON  
AND OTHER POEMS

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LORD BYRON



# CHILDE HAROLD

## CANTO THE FOURTH

### I

I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,  
A palace and a prison on each hand;  
I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:  
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand      5  
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
O'er the far times, when many a subject land  
Looked to the wingéd Lion's marble piles,  
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred  
    isles.

### II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,      10  
Rising with her tiara of proud towers  
At airy distance, with majestic motion,  
A ruler of the waters and their powers,  
And such she was;—her daughters had their  
    dowers  
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East      15  
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:  
In purple was she robed and of her feast  
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity in-  
    creased.

## III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,  
 And silent rows the songless gondolier; 20  
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,  
 And music meets not always now the ear;  
 Those days are gone, but Beauty still is here;  
 States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die,  
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear, 25  
 The pleasant place of all festivity,  
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

## IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond  
 Her name in story, and her long array  
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond 30  
 Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway:  
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay  
 With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor  
 And Pierre can not be swept or worn away,  
 The keystones of the arch!—though all were o'er,  
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore. 36

## V

The beings of the mind are not of clay;  
 Essentially immortal, they create  
 And multiply in us a brighter ray  
 And more beloved existence. That which Fate 40  
 Prohibits to dull life in this our state  
 Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,  
 First exiles, then replaces what we hate;  
 Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,  
 And with a fresher growth replenishing the void. 45

## VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,  
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;  
And this worn feeling peoples many a page,  
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye.  
Yet there are things whose strong reality 50  
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues  
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,  
And the strange constellations which the Muse  
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

## VII

I saw or dream'd of such,—but let them go,— 55  
They came like truth and disappeared like dreams;  
And whatsoe'er they were—are now but so.  
I could replace them if I would; still teems  
My mind with many a form which aptly seems  
Such as I sought for, and at moments found: 60  
Let these too go, for waking Reason deems  
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,  
And other voices speak and other sights surround.

## VIII

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes  
Have made me not a stranger—to the mind 65  
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;  
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find  
A country with—ay, or without mankind;  
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,  
Not without cause; and should I leave behind 70  
The inviolate island of the sage and free,  
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

## IX

Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay  
 My ashes in a soil which is not mine,  
 My spirit shall resume it—if we may 75  
 Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine  
 My hopes of being remembered in my line  
 With my land's language: if too fond and far  
 These aspirations in their scope incline,—  
 If my fame should be, as my fortunes are, 80  
 Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

## X

My name from out the temple where the dead  
 Are honour'd by the nations—let it be,  
 And light the laurels on a loftier head  
 And be the Spartan's epitaph on me, 85  
 'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.'  
 Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;  
 The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree  
 I planted,—they have torn me—and I bleed:  
 I should have known what fruit would spring from such  
 a seed. 90

## XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;  
 And annual marriage now no more renew'd,  
 The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,  
 Neglected garment of her widowhood!  
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood 95  
 Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,  
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,  
 And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour  
 When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

## XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—  
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt; 101  
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains  
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt  
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt  
The sunshine for a while, and downward go 105  
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt;—  
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo,  
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

## XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,  
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun; 110  
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?  
Are they not *bridled*?—Venice lost and won,  
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,  
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!  
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,  
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes, 116  
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

## XIV

In youth she was all glory, a new Tyre,  
Her very by-word sprung from victory,  
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire 120  
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;  
Though making many slaves, herself still free,  
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;—  
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye  
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight! 125  
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

## XV

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long file  
 Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;  
 But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile  
 Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust; 130  
 Their sceptre broken and their sword in rust,  
 Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,  
 Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must  
 Too oft remind her who and what enthralls,  
 Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

## XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse, 136  
 And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,  
 Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,  
 Her voice their only ransom from afar:  
 See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car 140  
 Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins  
 Fall from his hands—his idle scimitar  
 Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,  
 And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his  
 strains.

## XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine, 145  
 Wère all thy proud historic deeds forgot,  
 Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,  
 Thy love of Tasso should have cut the knot  
 Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot  
 Is shameful to the nations,—most of all, 150  
 Albion, to thee: the Ocean queen should not  
 Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall  
 Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.



## XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me  
Was as a fairy city of the heart, 155  
Rising like water-columns from the sea.  
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart:  
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art,  
Had stamp'd her image in me; and even so,  
Although I found her thus, we did not part, 160  
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe  
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

## XIX

I can repeople with the past—and of  
The present there is still for eye and thought,  
And meditation chasen'd down, enough, 165  
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;  
And of the happiest moments which were wrought  
Within the web of my existence, some  
From thee, fair Venice, have their colours caught:  
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,  
Nor torture shake, or mine would now be cold and  
dumb. 171

## XX

But from their nature will the tannen grow  
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,  
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below  
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks 175  
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks  
The howling tempest, till its height and frame  
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks  
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came, 179  
And grew a giant tree;—the mind may grow the same.

## XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root  
 Of life and sufferance make its firm abode  
 In bare and desolated bosoms: mute  
 The camel labours with the heaviest load,  
 And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestow'd 185  
 In vain should such example be; if they,  
 Things of ignoble or of savage mood,  
 Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay  
 May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.

## XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed 190  
 Even by the sufferer; and in each event,  
 Ends:—Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,  
 Return to whence they came—with like intent,  
 And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,  
 Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time, 195  
 And perish with the reed on which they leant;  
 Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,  
 According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

## XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued  
 There comes a token like a scorpion's sting, . 200  
 Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;  
 And slight withal may be the things which bring  
 Back on the heart the weight which it would fling  
 Aside forever: it may be a sound,—  
 A tone of music, summer's eve, or spring, 205  
 A flower, the wind, the ocean,—which shall wound,  
 Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly  
 bound;

## XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace  
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,  
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface 210  
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,  
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,  
When least we deem of such, calls up to view  
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,  
The cold—the changed—perchance the dead—anew,  
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost—too many!—yet how  
few! 216

## XXV

But my soul wanders; I demand it back  
To meditate amongst decay, and stand  
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track  
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land 220  
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,  
And *is*, the loveliest, and must ever be  
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,  
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free, 224  
The beautiful, the brave—the lords of earth and sea,

## XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!  
And even since, and now, fair Italy,  
Thou art the garden of the world, the home  
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;  
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee? 230  
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste  
More rich than other climes' fertility;  
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced  
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

## XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night— 235  
 Sunset divides the sky with her, a sea  
 Of glory streams along the Alpine height  
 Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free  
 From clouds, but of all colours seems to be  
 Melted to one vast Iris of the West, 240  
 Where the day joins the past Eternity;  
 While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest  
 Floats through the azure air, an island of the blest!

## XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns  
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still 245  
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains  
 Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,  
 As day and night contending were, until  
 Nature reclaimed her order: gently flows  
 The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil 250  
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose,  
 Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it  
 glows,

## XXIX

Filled with the face of heaven, which from afar  
 Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,  
 From the rich sunset to the rising star, 255  
 Their magical variety diffuse.  
 And now they change; a paler shadow strews  
 Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day  
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues  
 With a new colour as it gasps away, 260  
 The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray.

## XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua;—rear'd in air,  
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose  
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair  
Many familiar with his well-sung woes, 265  
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose  
To raise a language, and his land reclaim  
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes;  
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name  
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame. 270

## XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua where he died,  
The mountain village where his latter days  
Went down the vale of years; and 'tis their pride—  
An honest pride, and let it be their praise—  
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze 275  
His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain  
And venerably simple, such as raise  
A feeling more accordant with his strain  
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

## XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt 280  
Is one of that complexion which seems made  
For those who their mortality have felt,  
And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd  
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,  
Which shows a distant prospect far away 285  
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd  
For they can lure no further; and the ray  
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

## XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,  
And shining in the brawling brook, where-by, 290  
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours  
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye  
Idlesse it seem, hath its morality.  
If from society we learn to live,  
'Tis solitude should teach us how to die; 295  
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give  
No hollow aid; alone—man with his God must strive:

## XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair  
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey  
In melancholy bosoms, such as were 300  
Of moody texture from their earliest day  
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,  
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom  
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;  
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,  
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom. 305

## XXXV

Ferrara, in thy wide and grass-grown streets  
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,  
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats  
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood 310  
Of Este, which for many an age made good  
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore  
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood  
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore 314  
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

## XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame:  
 Hark to his strain and then survey his cell!  
 And see how dearly earned Torquato's fame,  
 And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell.  
 The miserable despot could not quell 320  
 The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend  
 With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell  
 Where he had plunged it. Glory without end  
 Scatter'd the clouds away, and on that name attend

## XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time; while thine 325  
 Would rot in its oblivion—in the sink  
 Of worthless dust which from thy boasted line  
 Is shaken into nothing—but the link  
 Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think  
 Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn. 330  
 Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink  
 From thee! if in another station born,  
 Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn:—

## XXXVIII

*Thou!* form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,  
 Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou 335  
 Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty;  
*He!* with a glory round his furrow'd brow,  
 Which emanated then, and dazzles now,  
 In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,  
 And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow 340  
 No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,  
 That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire!

## XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 'twas his  
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong  
 Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss. 345  
 Oh, victor unsurpassed in modern song!  
 Each year brings forth its millions; but how long  
 The tide of generations shall roll on,  
 And not the whole combined and countless throng  
 Compose a mind like thine? Though all in one  
 Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a  
 sun. 351

## XL

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,  
 Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,  
 The Bards of Hell and Chivalry; first rose  
 The Tuscan father's comedy divine; 355  
 Then not unequal to the Florentine  
 The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth  
 A new creation with his magic line,  
 And, like the Ariosto of the north, 359  
 Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth

## XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust  
 The iron crown of laurel's mimick'd leaves;  
 Nor was the ominous element unjust,  
 For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves  
 Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves, 365  
 And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;  
 Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,  
 Know, that the lightning sanctifies below  
 Whate'er it strikes;—yon head is doubly sacred now.



## XLII

Italia! oh, Italia! thou who hast 370  
The fatal gift of beauty, which became  
A funeral dower of present woes and past,  
On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,  
And annals graved in characters of flame.  
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness 375  
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim  
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press  
To shed thy blood and drink the tears of thy distress;

## XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal; or, less desired,  
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord 380  
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,  
Would not be seen the armèd torrents pour'd  
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde  
Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po  
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword  
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so, 386  
Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

## XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,  
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,  
The friend of Tully. As my bark did skim 390  
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,  
Came Megara before me, and behind  
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,  
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined  
Along the prow, and saw all these unite 395  
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight;—

## XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but uprear'd  
 Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd site,  
 Which only make more mourn'd and more endear'd  
 The last few rays of their far-scatter'd light 400  
 And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd might.  
 The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,  
 These sepulchres of cities which excite  
 Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page  
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

## XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine 406  
*His* country's ruin added to the mass  
 Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their decline,  
 And I in desolation. All that *was*  
 Of then destruction *is*; and now, alas! 410  
 Rome—Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,  
 In the same dust and blackness, and we pass  
 The skeleton of her Titanic form,  
 Wrecks of another world whose ashes still are warm.

## XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land 415  
 Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;  
 Mother of Arts, as once of arms; thy hand  
 Was then our guardian, and is still our guide:  
 Parent of our Religion, whom the wide  
 Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven. 420  
 Europe, repentant of her parricide,  
 Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,  
 Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

## XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,  
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps 425  
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.  
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps  
Her corn and wine and oil, and plenty leaps  
To laughing life with her redundant horn.  
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps 430  
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,  
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

## XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills  
The air around with beauty. We inhale  
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils 435  
Part of its immortality; the veil  
Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale  
We stand, and in that form and face behold  
What mind can make when Nature's self would fail;  
And to the fond idolaters of old 440  
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould.

## L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,  
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart  
Reels with its fulness; there—for ever there—  
Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art, 445  
We stand as captives and would not depart.  
Away!—there need no words nor terms precise,  
The paltry jargon of the marble mart  
Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes:  
Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shep-  
herd's prize. 450

## LI

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?  
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,  
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies  
Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War?  
And gazing in thy face as toward a star 455  
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,  
Feeding on thy sweet cheek; while thy lips are  
With lava kisses melting while they burn,  
Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an  
urn!

## LII

Glowing and circumfused in speechless love, 460  
Their full divinity inadequate  
That feeling to express or to improve,  
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate  
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight  
Of earth recoils upon us;—let it go! 465  
We can recall such visions and create,  
From what has been or might be, things which grow  
Into thy statue's form and look like gods below.

## LIII

I leave to learnèd fingers and wise hands,  
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell 470  
How well his connoisseurship understands  
The graceful bend and the voluptuous swell:  
Let these describe the undescribable:  
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream  
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell, 475  
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream  
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

## LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie  
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is  
Even in itself an immortality, 480  
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,  
The particle of those sublimities  
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose  
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,  
The starry Galileo, with his woes; 485  
Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

## LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,  
Might furnish forth creation. Italy!  
Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand  
rents  
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny, 490  
And hath denied, to every other sky  
Spirits which soar from ruin:—thy decay  
Is still impregnate with divinity,  
Which guilds it with revivifying ray;  
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day. 495

## LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three—  
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,  
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit, he  
Of the Hundred Tales of Love—where did they lay  
Their bones, distinguished from our common clay 500  
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,  
And have their country's marbles nought to say?  
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?  
Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust?

## LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar, 505  
 Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore;  
 Thy factions in their worse than civil war,  
 Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore  
 Their children's children would in vain adore  
 With the remorse of ages; and the crown 510  
 Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,  
 Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,  
 His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled—not thine own.

## LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd  
 His dust; and lies it not her Great among, 515  
 With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed  
 O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue?  
 That music in itself, whose sounds are song,  
 The poetry of speech? No;—even his tomb  
 Uptorn must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong, 520  
 No more amidst the meaner dead find room,  
 Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom!*

## LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust,—  
 Yet for this want more noted, as of yore  
 The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust, 525  
 Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more.  
 Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,  
 Fortress of falling empire, honour'd sleeps  
 The immortal exile; Arqua, too, her store  
 Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, 530  
 While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead, and  
 weeps.

## LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones,  
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues  
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones  
Of merchant-dukes? The momentary dew 535  
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse  
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,  
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,  
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread  
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely  
head. 540

## LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes  
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,  
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;  
There be more marvels yet—but not for mine;  
For I have been accustom'd to entwine 545  
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,  
Than Art in galleries: though a work divine  
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields  
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

## LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam 550  
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles  
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;  
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles  
Come back before me as his skill beguiles  
The host between the mountains and the shore, 555  
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,  
And torrents, swollen to rivers with their gore,  
Reek through the sultry plain with legions scattered o'er,

## LXIII

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds;  
 And such the storm of battle on this day, 560  
 And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds  
 To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,  
 An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!  
 None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,  
 And yawning forth a grave for those who lay 565  
 Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet;  
 Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

## LXIV

The earth to them was as a rolling bark  
 Which bore them to Eternity; they saw  
 The Ocean round, but had no time to mark 570  
 The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,  
 In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe  
 Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds  
 Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw  
 From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds  
 Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no  
 words. 576

## LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;  
 Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain  
 Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;  
 Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain 580  
 Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en—  
 A little rill of scanty stream and bed—  
 A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;  
 And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead  
 Made the earth wet and turn'd the unwilling waters red.



## LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus, in thy sweetest wave 586  
Of the most living crystal that was e'er  
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave  
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear  
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer 590  
Grazes,—the purest god of gentle waters,  
And most serene of aspect, and most clear!  
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters—  
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

## LXVII

And on thy happy shore a temple still, 595  
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,  
Upon a mild declivity of hill,  
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps  
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps  
The finny darter with the glittering scales, 600  
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;  
While, chance, some scatter'd water-lily sails  
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling  
tales

## LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!  
If through the air a zephyr more serene 605  
Win to the brow, 'tis his; and if ye trace  
Along his margin a more eloquent green,  
If on the heart the freshness of the scene  
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust  
Of weary life a moment lave it clean 610  
With Nature's baptism,—'tis to him ye must  
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

## LXIX

The roar of waters!—from the headlong height  
 Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;  
 The fall of waters! rapid as the light 615  
 The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;  
 The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,  
 And boil in endless torture; while the sweat  
 Of their great agony, wrung out from this  
 Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet 620  
 That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

## LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again  
 Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,  
 With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,  
 Is an eternal April to the ground, 625  
 Making it all one emerald:—how profound  
 The gulf! and how the giant element  
 From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,  
 Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent,  
 With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful  
 vent 630

## LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows  
 More like the fountain of an infant sea  
 Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes  
 Of a new world, than only thus to be  
 Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly, 635  
 With many windings, through the vale:—Look back  
 Lo, where it comes like an eternity,  
 As if to sweep down all things in its track,  
 Charming the eye with dread—a matchless cataract,

## LXXII

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge, 640  
 From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,  
 An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,  
 Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn  
 Its steady dyes while all around is torn  
 By the distracted waters, bears serene 645  
 Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn;  
 Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,  
 Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

## LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,  
 The infant Alps, which—had I not before 650  
 Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine  
 Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar  
 The thundering lauwine—might be worshipp'd more;  
 But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear  
 Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar 655  
 Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,  
 And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

## LXXIV.

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name;  
 And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly  
 Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame, 660  
 For still they soar'd unutterably high:  
 I've looked on Ida with a Trojan's eye;  
 Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made  
 These hills seem things of lesser dignity,  
 All, save the lone Soracte's height, display'd 665  
 Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

## LXXV.

For our remembrance, and from out the plain  
 Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,  
 And on the curl hangs pausing. Not in vain  
 May he, who will, his recollections rake, 670  
 And quote in classic raptures, and awake  
 The hills with Latin echoes; I abhorr'd  
 Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,  
 The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word  
 In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record 675

## LXXVI.

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn'd  
 My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught  
 My mind to meditate what then it learn'd,  
 Yet such the fix'd inveteracy wrought  
 By the impatience of my early thought, 680  
 That, with the freshness wearing out before  
 My mind could relish what it might have sought,  
 If free to choose, I cannot now restore  
 Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

## LXXVII.

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so, 685  
 Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse  
 To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,  
 To comprehend, but never love thy verse,  
 Although no deeper Moralist rehearse  
 Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art, 690  
 Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,  
 Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart;  
 Yet fare thee well—upon Soracte's ridge we part.

## LXXVIII.

Oh Rome, my country! city of the soul!  
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee, 695  
Lone mother of dead empires, and control  
In their shut breasts their petty misery.  
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see  
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way  
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye! 700  
Whose agonies are evils of a day—  
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay

## LXXIX.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,  
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;  
An empty urn within her wither'd hands, 705  
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago:  
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;  
The very sepulchres lie tenantless  
Of their heroic dwellers;—dost thou flow,  
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness? 710  
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

## LXXX.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,  
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;  
She saw her glories star by star expire,  
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride, 715  
Where the car climb'd the capitol; far and wide  
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:—  
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,  
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light, 719  
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

## LXXXI.

The double night of ages, and of her,  
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrapt  
 All round us; we but feel our way to err:  
 The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,  
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap; 725  
 But Rome is as the desert where we steer  
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap  
 Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear—  
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

## LXXXII.

Alas, the lofty city! and alas, 730  
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day  
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass  
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!  
 Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,  
 And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall be 735  
 Her resurrection; all beside—decay.  
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see  
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was  
 free!

## LXXXIII.

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,  
 Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst subdue 740  
 Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel  
 The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due  
 Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew  
 O'er prostrate Asia;—thou, who with thy frown  
 Annihilated senates—Roman, too, 745  
 With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down  
 With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

## LXXXIV.

The dictatorial wreath,—couldst thou divine  
To what would one day dwindle that which made  
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine 750  
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?  
She who was named Eternal; and array'd  
Her warriors but to conquer—she who veil'd  
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,  
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd, 755  
Her rushing wings—Oh, she who was Almighty hail'd!

## LXXXV.

Sylla was first of victors; but our own  
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he  
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the throne  
Down to a block—immortal rebel! See 760  
What crimes it costs to be a moment free  
And famous through all ages! but beneath  
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;  
His day of double victory and death  
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his  
breath. 765

## LXXXVI.

The third of the same moon whose former course  
Had all but crowned him, on the self-same day,  
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,  
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.  
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway  
And all we deem delightful and consume 770  
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,  
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?  
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

## LXXXVII.

And thou, dread statue, yet existent in 775  
 The austerest form of naked majesty!  
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,  
 At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,  
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,  
 An offering to thine altar from the queen 780  
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,  
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been  
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

## LXXXVIII.

And thou, the thunderstricken nurse of Rome!  
 She-wolf, whose brazen-imaged dugs impart 785  
 The milk of conquest yet within the dome  
 Where, as a monument of antique art,  
 Thou standest; mother of the mighty heart,  
 Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,  
 Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart, 790  
 And thy limbs black with lightning—dost thou yet  
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

## LXXXIX.

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead—  
 The men of iron; and the world hath rear'd  
 Cities from out their sepulchres. Men bled 795  
 In imitation of the things they fear'd  
 And fought and conquer'd and the same course steer'd,  
 At apish distance; but as yet none have,  
 Nor could the same supremacy have near'd,  
 Save one vain man, who is not in the grave, 800  
 But vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave—



## XC.

The fool of false dominion—and a kind  
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old  
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind  
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould, 805  
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,  
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd  
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,  
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd 809  
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he beam'd,

## XCI.

And came—and saw—and conquer'd! But the man  
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,  
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,  
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,  
With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be 815  
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;  
With but one weakest weakness—vanity,  
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—  
At what? can he avouch—or answer what he claim'd?—

## XCII.

And would be all or nothing—nor could wait 820  
For the sure grave to level him; few years  
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,  
On whom we tread. For *this* the conqueror rears  
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears  
And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd, 825  
An universal deluge, which appears  
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,  
And ebbs but to reflow!—Renew thy rainbow, God!

## XCIII.

What from this barren being do we reap?  
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail, 830  
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,  
 And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;  
 Opinion an omnipotence,—whose veil  
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until right  
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale 835  
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,  
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have  
 too much light.

## XCIV.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,  
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,  
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so die, 840  
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage  
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage  
 War for their chains, and rather than be free,  
 Bleed gladiator-like and still engage  
 Within the same arena where they see 845  
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

## XCV.

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest between  
 Man and his Maker—but of things allow'd,  
 Avert'd, and known—and daily, hourly seen—  
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd 850  
 And the intent of tyranny avow'd,  
 The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown  
 The apes of him who humbled once the proud  
 And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;  
 Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done. 855

## XCVI.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,  
And Freedom find no champion and no child  
Such as Columbia saw arise when she  
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?  
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild, 860  
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar  
Of cataracts, where nursing nature smiled  
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more  
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

## XCVII.

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,  
And fatal have her Saturnalia been 866  
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;  
Because the deadly days which we have seen,  
And vile ambition, that built up between  
Man and his hopes an adamant wall, 870  
And the base pageant last upon the scene,  
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall  
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his  
second fall.

## XCVIII.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying, 874  
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;  
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,  
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:  
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,  
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,  
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find 880  
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;  
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

## XCIX.

There is a stern round tower of other days,  
 Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,  
 Such as an army's baffled strength delays, 885  
 Standing with half its battlements alone,  
 And with two thousand years of ivy grown,  
 The garland of eternity, where wave  
 The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown;—  
 What was this tower of strength? within its cave  
 What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.

## C.

But who was she, the lady of the dead, 892  
 Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?  
 Worthy a king's—or more—a Roman's bed?  
 What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear? 895  
 What daughter of her beauties was the heir?  
 How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not  
 So honour'd—and conspicuously there,  
 Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,  
 Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot? 900

## CI.

Was she as those who love their lords, or they  
 Who love the lords of others?—such have been  
 Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.  
 Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,  
 Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen, 905  
 Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war,  
 Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean  
 To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar  
 Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affections  
 are. 909

## CII.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd  
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb  
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud  
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom  
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom 914  
Heaven gives its favourites—early death; 'yet shed  
A sunset charm around her, and illumine  
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,  
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

## CIII.

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,  
Charms, kindred, children—with the silver gray  
On her long tresses, which might yet recall, 921  
It may be, still a something of the day  
When they were braided, and her proud array  
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed  
By Rome.—But whither would Conjecture stray? 925  
Thus much alone we know—Metella died,  
The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his love or pride!

## CIV.

I know not why, but standing thus by thee,  
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,  
Thou tomb! and other days come back on me 930  
With recollected music, though the tone  
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan  
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;  
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone  
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind 935  
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves  
behind;

## CV.

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,  
 Built me a little bark of hope, once more  
 To battle with the ocean and the shocks  
 Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar 940  
 Which rushes on the solitary shore  
 Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear.  
 But could I gather from the wave-worn store  
 Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?  
 There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is  
 here. 945

## CVI.

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony  
 Shall henceforth be my music, and the night  
 The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,  
 As I now hear them, in the fading light  
 Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site, 950  
 Answering each other on the Palatine,  
 With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,  
 And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine  
 What are our petty griefs?—let me not number mine.

## CVII.

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown 955  
 Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd  
 On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown  
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd  
 In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,  
 Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths, or halls? 960  
 Pronounce who can: for all that learning reap'd  
 From her research hath been, that these are walls—  
 Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

## CVIII.

There is the moral of all human tales;  
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, 965  
First Freedom and then Glory—when that fails,  
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last.  
And History, with all her volumes vast,  
Hath but *one* page,—'tis better written here  
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd 970  
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear  
Heart soul could seek, tongue ask.—Away with words  
draw near,

## CIX

Admire, exult—despise—laugh, weep—for here  
There is such matter for all feeling:—Man!  
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear, 975  
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,  
This mountain, whose obliterated plan  
The pyramid of empires pinnaced,  
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van  
Till the sun's rays with added flame were filled!  
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to  
build? 981

## CX.

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,  
Thou nameless column with the buried base!  
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?  
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place. 985  
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,  
Titus' or Trajan's? No—'tis that of Time:  
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace  
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb 989  
To crush the imperial urn whose ashes slept sublime,

## CXI.

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,  
 And looking to the stars. They had contain'd  
 A spirit which with these would find a home,  
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,  
 The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd 995  
 But yielded back his conquests: he was more  
 Than a mere Alexander, and unstain'd  
 With household blood and wine, serenely wore  
 His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's name adore.

## CXII.

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place 1000  
 Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep  
 Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,  
 The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap  
 Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap  
 Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below, 1005  
 A thousand years of silenced factions sleep—  
 The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,  
 And still the eloquent air breathes—burns with Cicero!

## CXIII.

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:  
 Here a proud people's passions were exhaled, 1010  
 From the first hour of empire in the bud  
 To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;  
 But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,  
 And Anarchy assumed her attributes;  
 Till every lawless soldier who assail'd 1015  
 Trod on the trembling senates' slavish mutes,  
 Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.



## CXIV.

Then turned me to her latest tribune's name,  
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,  
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame— 1020  
The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—  
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree  
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf  
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be— 1025  
The forum's champion, and the people's chief—  
Her new-born Numa thou—with reign, alas, too brief.

## CXV.

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart  
Which found no mortal resting place so fair  
As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art  
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air, 1030  
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;  
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,  
Who found a more than common votary there  
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth, 1034  
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

## CXVI.

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled  
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face  
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,  
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,  
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase 1040  
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,  
Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the base  
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap  
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy  
creep,

## CXVII.

Fantastically tangled. The green hills 1045  
 Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass  
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills  
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;  
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,  
 Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes 1050  
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;  
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes  
 Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its  
 skies.

## CXVIII.

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,  
 Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating 1055  
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.  
 The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting  
 With her most starry canopy; and seating  
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?  
 This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting  
 Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell 1061  
 Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle!

## CXIX.

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,  
 Blend a celestial with a human heart;  
 And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing, 1065  
 Share with immortal transports? Could thine art  
 Make them indeed immortal, and impart  
 The purity of heaven to earthly joys,  
 Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—  
 The dull satiety which all destroys— 1070  
 And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy?

## CXX.

Alas! our young affections run to waste,  
Or water but the desert; whence arise  
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,  
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes, 1075  
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,  
And trees whose gums are poison;—such the plants  
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies  
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants  
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants. 1080

## CXXI.

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art—  
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,  
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,  
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see  
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be; 1085  
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,  
Even with its own desiring phantasy,  
And to a thought such shape and image given,  
As haunts the unquench'd soul—parch'd—wearied—  
          wrung—and riven.

## CXXII.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased, 1090  
And fevers into false creation:—where,  
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?—  
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?  
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare  
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men, 1095  
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,  
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,  
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

## CXXIII.

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy; but the cure  
 Is bitterer still. As charm by charm unwinds 1100  
 Which robed our idols, and we see too sure  
 Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's  
 Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds  
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,  
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;  
 The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun, 1106  
 Seems ever near the prize,—wealthiest when most  
 undone.

## CXXIV.

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—  
 Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst,  
 Though to the last, in verge of our decay, 1110  
 Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—  
 But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.  
 Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same,  
 Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—  
 For all are meteors with a different name, 1115  
 And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

## CXXV.

Few—none—find what they love or could have loved,  
 Though accident, blind contact, and the strong  
 Necessity of loving, have removed  
 Antipathies—but to recur, ere long, 1120  
 Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;  
 And circumstance, that unspiritual god  
 And miscreator, makes and helps along  
 Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,  
 Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have  
 trod. 1125

## CXXVI.

Our life is a false nature, 'tis not in  
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,  
This uneradicable taint of sin,  
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree      1129  
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be  
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—  
Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see—  
And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through  
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

## CXXVII.

Yet let us ponder boldly; 'tis a base      1135  
Abandonment of reason to resign  
Our right of thought, our last and only place  
Of refuge—this, at least, shall still be mine.  
Though from our birth the faculty divine      1139  
Is chain'd and tortured—cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,  
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine  
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,  
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the  
blind.

## CXXVIII.

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,  
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,      1145  
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,—  
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine  
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine  
Should be the light which streams here, to illumine  
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine      1150  
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom  
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

## CXXIX.

Hues which have words and speak to ye of heaven,  
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,  
 And shadows forth its glory. There is given 1155  
 Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,  
 A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant  
 His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power,  
 And magic in the ruin'd battlement,  
 For which the palace of the present hour 1160  
 Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are its dower.

## CXXX.

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,  
 Adorner of the ruin, comforter  
 And only healer when the heart hath bled—  
 Time! the corrector where our judgments err, 1165  
 The test of truth, love,—sole philosopher,  
 For all besides are sophists, from thy thrift,  
 Which never loses though it doth defer—  
 Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift 1169  
 My hands and eyes and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

## CXXXI.

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine  
 And temple more divinely desolate,  
 Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,  
 Ruins of years—though few, yet full of fate:—  
 If thou hast ever seen me to elate, 1175  
 Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne  
 Good, and reserved my pride against the hate  
 Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn  
 This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not mourn?

## CXXXII.

And thou, who never yet of human wrong      1180  
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!  
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long—  
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,  
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss  
For that unnatural retribution—just,      1185  
Had it but been from hands less near—in this  
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!  
Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt  
and must.

## CXXXIII.

It is not that I may not have incurr'd  
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound      1190  
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd  
With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound;  
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;  
To thee I do devote it—*thou* shalt take      1194  
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,  
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake—  
But let that pass—I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

## CXXXIV.

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now  
I shrink from what is suffer'd; let him speak  
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,      1200  
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak:  
But in this page a record will I seek.  
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,  
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak  
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,      1205  
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

## CXXXV.

That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not—  
 Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!—  
 Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?  
 Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven? 1210  
 Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,  
 Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?  
 And only not to desperation driven,  
 Because not altogether of such clay  
 As rots into the souls of those whom I survey. 1215

## CXXXVI.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy  
 Have I not seen what human things could do?  
 From the loud roar of foaming calumny  
 To the small whisper of the as paltry few,  
 And subtler venom of the reptile crew, 1220  
 The Janus glance of whose significant eye,  
 Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,  
 And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,  
 Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

## CXXXVII.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain: 1225  
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,  
 And my frame perish even in conquering pain;  
 But there is that within me which shall tire  
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;  
 Something unearthly which they deem not of, 1230  
 Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,  
 Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move  
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.



## CXXXVIII.

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread power!  
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here 1235  
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour  
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;  
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear  
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene  
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear 1240  
That we become a part of what has been,  
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

## CXXXIX.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmur'd pity or loud-roar'd applause,  
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow man. 1245  
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because  
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,  
And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not?  
What matters where we fall to fill the maws  
Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot? 1250  
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

## CXL.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:  
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low— 1255  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch  
who won. 1260

## CXLI.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes  
 Were with his heart and that was far away;  
 He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,  
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play, 1265  
*There* was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,  
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—  
 All this rush'd with his blood.—Shall he expire  
 And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

## CXLII.

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;  
 And there, where buzzing nations choked the ways,  
 And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream  
 Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;  
 Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise  
 Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd, 1275  
 My voice sounds much, and fall the stars' faint rays  
 On the arena void—seats crush'd—walls bow'd—  
 And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely  
 loud.

## CXLIH.

A ruin—yet what ruin! From its mass  
 Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd; 1280  
 Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,  
 And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.  
 Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?  
 Alas! developed, opens the decay,  
 When the colossal fabric's form is near'd: 1285  
 It will not bear the brightness of the day,  
 Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft  
 away.

## CXLIV.

But when the rising moon begins to climb  
 Its topmost arch and gently pauses there; 1289  
 When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,  
 And the low night-breeze waves along the air  
 The garland forest, which the gray walls wear  
 Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;  
 When the light shines serene but doth not glare,  
 Then in this magic circle raise the dead: 1295  
 Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread.

## CXLV.

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;  
 When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;  
 And when Rome falls—the World.' From our own  
 land  
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall 1300  
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call  
 Ancient; and these three mortal things are still  
 On their foundations, and unalter'd all;  
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,  
 The World, the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye  
 will. 1305

## CXLVI.

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime—  
 Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,  
 From Jove to Jesus—spared and blest by time;  
 Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods 1309  
 Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods  
 His way through thorns to ashes—glorious dome!  
 Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods  
 Shiver upon thee—sanctuary and home  
 Of art and piety—Pantheon!—pride of Rome!

## CXLVII.

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts! 1315  
 Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads  
 A holiness appealing to all hearts—  
 To art a model; and to him who treads  
 Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds  
 Her light through thy sole aperture; to those 1320  
 Who worship, here are altars for their beads;  
 And they who feel for genius may repose  
 Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts around them  
 close.

## CXLVIII.

There is a dungeon, in whose dim, drear light  
 What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again! 1325  
 Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight—  
 Two insulated phantoms of the brain:  
 It is not so; I see them full and plain—  
 An old man, and a female young and fair,  
 Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein 1330  
 The blood is nectar;—but what doth she there  
 With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

## CXLIX.

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,  
 Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took  
 Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,  
 Blest into mother, in the innocent look 1336  
 Or even the piping cry of lips that brook  
 No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives  
 Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook  
 She sees her little bud put forth its leaves— 1340  
 What may the fruit be yet?—I know not—Cain was  
 Eve's.

## CL.

But here youth offers to old age the food,  
The milk of his own gift:—it is her sire  
To whom she renders back the debt of blood  
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire 1345  
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire  
Of health and holy feeling can provide  
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher  
Than Egypt's river:—from that gentle side  
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds  
no such tide. 1350

## CLI.

The starry fable of the milky way  
Has not thy story's purity; it is  
A constellation of a sweeter ray,  
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this  
Reverse of her decree than in the abyss 1355  
Where sparkle distant worlds. Oh, holiest nurse!  
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss  
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source  
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

## CLII.

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,  
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles, 1361  
Colossal copyist of deformity,  
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's  
Enormous model doom'd the artist's toils  
To build for giants, and for his vain earth, 1365  
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome. How smiles  
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,  
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

## CLIII.

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome  
 To which Diana's marble was a cell, 1370  
 Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!  
 I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle—  
 Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell  
 The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;  
 I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell 1375  
 Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd  
 Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

## CLIV.

But thou, of temples old or altars new,  
 Standest alone, with nothing like to thee—  
 Worthiest of God, the holy and the true, 1380  
 Since Zion's desolation, when that He  
 Forsook his former city, what could be,  
 Of earthly structures, in his honour piled  
 Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty, 1384  
 Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled  
 In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

## CLV.

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;  
 And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,  
 Expanded by the genius of the spot,  
 Has grown colossal, and can only find 1390  
 A fit abode wherein appear enshrined  
 Thy hopes of immortality; and thou  
 Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,  
 See thy God face to face as thou dost now  
 His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow. 1395

## CLVI.

Thou movest—but increasing with the advance,  
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise  
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;  
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise—  
All musical in its immensities; 1400  
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines where flame  
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies  
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their  
frame  
Sits on the firm-set ground—and this the clouds must  
claim.

## CLVII.

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break  
To separate contemplation the great whole; 1406  
And as the ocean many bays will make,  
That ask the eye—so here condense thy soul  
To more immediate objects, and control  
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart  
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll 1411  
In mighty graduations, part by part,  
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

## CLVIII.

Not by its fault—but thine. Our outward sense  
Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is 1415  
That what we have of feeling most intense  
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this  
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice  
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great  
Defies at first our Nature's littleness, 1420  
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate  
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

## CLIX.

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more  
 In such a survey than the sating gaze 1424  
 Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore  
 The worship of the place, or the mere praise  
 Of art and its great masters, who could raise  
 What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;  
 The fountain of sublimity displays 1429  
 Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man  
 Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

## CLX.

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see  
 Laocoon's torture dignifying pain—  
 A father's love and mortal's agony  
 With an immortal's patience blending. Vain 1434  
 The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain  
 And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp,  
 The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain  
 Rivets the living links, the enormous asp  
 Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp. 1440

## CLXI.

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,  
 The God of life and poesy and light,—  
 The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow  
 All radiant from his triumph in the fight;  
 The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright  
 With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye 1446  
 And nostril beautiful disdain and might  
 And majesty flash their full lightnings by,  
 Developing in that one glance the Diety.



## CLXII.

But in his delicate form—a dream of love, 1450  
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast  
Long'd for a deathless lover from above  
And madden'd in that vision—are exprest  
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd  
The mind with in its most unearthly mood, 1455  
When each conception was a heavenly guest—  
A ray of immortality—and stood,  
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

## CLXIII.

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven  
The fire which we endure, it was repaid 1460  
By him to whom the energy was given  
Which this poetic marble hath array'd  
With an eternal glory—which, if made  
By human hands, is not of human thought;  
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid 1465  
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught  
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which  
'twas wrought.

## CLXIV.

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,  
The being who upheld it through the past?  
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long. 1470  
He is no more—these breathings are his last,  
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,  
And he himself as nothing:—if he was  
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd  
With forms which live and suffer—let that pass—  
His shadow fades away into destruction's mass, 1476

## CLXV.

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all  
 That we inherit in its mortal shroud,  
 And spreads the dim and universal pall 1479  
 Through which all things grow phantoms; and the cloud  
 Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,  
 Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays  
 A melancholy halo scarce allow'd  
 To hover on the verge of darkness;—rays 1484  
 Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

## CLXVI.

And send us prying into the abyss,  
 To gather what we shall be when the frame  
 Shall be resolved to something less than this  
 Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,  
 And wipe the dust from off the idle name 1490  
 We never more shall hear,—but never more.  
 Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:  
 It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore  
 These fardels of the heart—the heart whose sweat was  
 gore.

## CLXVII.

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds, 1495  
 A long low distant murmur of dread sound,  
 Such as arises when a nation bleeds  
 With some deep and immedicable wound;  
 Through storm and darkness yawns the rending  
 ground;  
 The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief 1500  
 Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd;  
 And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief  
 She clasps a babe to whom her breast yields no relief.

## CLXVIII.

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?  
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead? 1505  
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low  
Some less majestic, less beloved head?  
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,  
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,  
Death hush'd that pang for ever; with thee fled  
The present happiness and promised joy 1511  
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

## CLXIX.

Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it be,  
Oh thou wert so happy, so adored! 1514  
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,  
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard  
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd  
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head  
Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,  
And desolate consort—vainly wert thou wed! 1520  
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

## CLXX.

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;  
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust  
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,  
The love of millions! How we did intrust 1525  
Futurity to her! and, though it must  
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd  
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd  
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd  
Like stars to shepherds' eyes:—'twas but a meteor  
beam'd

## CLXXI.

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well: 1531  
 The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue  
 Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,  
 Which from the birth of monarchy hath wrung  
 Its knell in princely ears till the o'er-stung 1535  
 Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate  
 Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung  
 Against their blind omnipotence a weight  
 Within the opposing scale which crushes soon or late,—

## CLXXII.

These might have been her destiny; but no, 1540  
 Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,  
 Good without effort, great without a foe;  
 But now a bride and mother—and now *there!*  
 How many ties did that stern moment tear!  
 From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast  
 Is linked the electric chain of that despair, 1546  
 Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest  
 The land which loved thee so that none could love thee  
 best.

## CLXXIII.

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills  
 So far, that the uprooting wind which tears 1550  
 The oak from his foundation, and which spills  
 The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears  
 Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares  
 The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;—  
 And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears 1555  
 A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,  
 All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

## CLXXIV.

And near Albano's scarce divided waves  
Shine from a sister valley; and afar  
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves 1560  
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,  
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star  
Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy right  
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar  
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight 1565  
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

## CLXXV.

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,  
And he and I must part—so let it be:  
His task and mine alike are nearly done;  
Yet once more let us look upon the sea; 1570  
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,  
And from the Alban Mount we now behold  
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we  
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold  
Those waves we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

## CLXXVI.

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long years— 1576  
Long, though not very many—since have done  
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears  
Have left us nearly where we had begun:  
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run; 1580  
We have had our reward, and it is here,—  
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,  
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear  
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

## CLXXVII.

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling place, 1585  
 With one fair spirit for my minister,  
 That I might all forget the human race,  
 And, hating no one, love but only her!  
 Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir  
 I feel myself exalted, can ye not 1590  
 Accord me such a being? Do I err  
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot,  
 Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot?

## CLXXVIII.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595  
 There is society where none intrudes,  
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:  
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,  
 From these our interviews, in which I steal  
 From all I may be or have been before, 1600  
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
 What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

## CLXXIX.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!  
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;  
 Man marks the earth with ruin, his control 1605  
 Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain  
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
 When for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan, 1610  
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

## CLXXX.

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields  
Arc not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise  
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields  
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise, 1615  
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,  
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray  
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies  
His petty hope in some near port or bay, 1619  
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

## CLXXXI.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls  
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake  
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,  
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
Their clay creator the vain title take 1625  
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war,—  
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,  
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar. 1629

## CLXXXII.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—  
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?  
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,  
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou, 1635  
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;  
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;  
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

## CLXXXIII.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
 Glasses itself in tempests; in all time, 1640  
 Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,  
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
 Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—  
 The image of Eternity—the throne  
 Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime 1645  
 The monsters of the deep are made; each zone  
 Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

## CLXXXIV.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy  
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be  
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy  
 I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me 1651  
 Were a delight; and if the freshening sea  
 Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,  
 For I was as it were a child of thee,  
 And trusted to thy billows far and near, 1655  
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

## CLXXXV.

My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme  
 Has died into an echo; it is fit  
 The spell should break of this protracted dream.  
 The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit 1660  
 My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ,—  
 Would it were worthier! but I am not now  
 That which I have been—and my visions flit  
 Less palpably before me—and the glow 1665  
 Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.



## CLXXXVI.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—  
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!  
Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene  
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell  
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell 1670  
A single recollection, not in vain  
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;  
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,  
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of his strain!

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,  
For there thy habitation is the heart—  
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;  
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—  
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.  
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,  
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,  
Until his very steps have left a trace  
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
By Bonnivard!—May none these marks efface!  
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

### I.

My hair is gray, but not with years,  
Nor grew it white  
In a single night,  
As men's have grown from sudden fears.  
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,  
But rusted with a vile repose, 6  
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,  
And mine has been the fate of those  
To whom the goodly earth and air  
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare; 10  
But this was for my father's faith  
I suffered chains and courted death;  
That father perished at the stake  
For tenets he would not forsake;



I lost their long and heavy score, 45  
 When my last brother drooped and died  
 And I lay living by his side.

## III.

They chained us each to a column stone,  
 And we were three—yet, each alone;  
 We could not move a single pace, 50  
 We could not see each other's face,  
 But with that pale and livid light  
 That made us strangers in our sight:  
 And thus together—yet apart,  
 Fettered in hand, but joined in heart; 55  
 'Twas still some solace, in the dearth  
 Of the pure elements of earth,  
 To hearken to each other's speech,  
 And each turn comforter to each  
 With some new hope or legend old, 60  
 Or song heroically bold;  
 But even these at length grew cold.  
 Our voices took a dreary tone,  
 An echo of the dungeon stone,  
     A grating sound—not full and free  
     As they of yore were wont to be; 65  
     It might be fancy—but to me  
 They never sounded like our own.

## IV.

I was the eldest of the three,  
     And to uphold and cheer the rest 70  
     I ought to do—and did my best—  
 And each did well in his degree.

The youngest, whom my father loved,  
Because our mother's brow was given  
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven, 75  
For him my soul was sorely moved:  
And truly might it be distressed  
To see such bird in such a nest;  
For he was beautiful as day—  
(When day was beautiful to me 80  
As to young eagles being free)—  
A polar day, which will not see  
A sunset till its summer's gone,  
Its sleepless summer of long light,  
The snow-clad offspring of the sun: 85  
And thus he was as pure and bright,  
And in his natural spirit gay,  
With tears for naught but others' ills,  
And then they flowed like mountain rills,  
Unless he could assuage the woe 90  
Which he abhorred to view below.

## v.

The other was as pure of mind,  
But formed to combat with his kind;  
Strong in his frame, and of a mood  
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood, 95  
And perished in the foremost rank  
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:  
His spirit withered with their clank,  
I saw it silently decline—  
And so perchance in sooth did mine: 100  
But yet I forced it on to cheer  
Those relics of a home so dear.

He was a hunter of the hills,  
 Had followed there the deer and wolf;  
 To him this dungeon was a gulf, 105  
 And fettered feet the worst of ills.

## VI.

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls,  
 A thousand feet in depth below  
 Its massy waters meet and flow;  
 Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110  
 From Chillon's snow-white battlement,  
 Which round about the wave intralls:  
 A double dungeon wall and wave  
 Have made—and like a living grave.  
 Below the surface of the lake 115  
 The dark vault lies wherein we lay,  
 We heard it ripple night and day;  
 Sounding o'er our heads it knocked  
 And I have felt the winter's spray  
 Wash through the bars when winds were high 120  
 And wanton in the happy sky;  
 And then the very rock hath rocked,  
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked,  
 Because I could have smiled to see  
 The death that would have set me free. 125

## VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,  
 I said his mighty heart declined,  
 He loathed and put away his food;  
 It was not that 'twas course and rude,  
 For we were used to hunter's fare, 130

And for the like had little care:  
The milk drawn from the mountain goat  
Was changed for water from the moat,  
Our bread was such as captive's tears  
Have moistened many a thousand years, 135  
Since man first pent his fellow men  
Like brutes within an iron den;  
But what were these to us or him?  
These wasted not his heart or limb;  
My brother's soul was of that mould 140  
Which in a palace had grown cold,  
Had his free breathing been denied  
The range of the steep mountain side  
But why delay the truth?—he died.  
I saw and could not hold his head, 145  
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—  
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,  
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.  
He died, and they unlocked his chain,  
And scooped for him a shallow grave 150  
Even from the cold earth of our cave.  
I begged them, as a boon, to lay  
His corse in dust whereon the day  
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,  
But then within my brain it wrought, 155  
That even in death his freeborn breast  
In such a dungeon could not rest.  
I might have spared my idle prayer—  
They coldly laughed and—laid him there:  
The flat and turfless earth above 160  
The being we so much did love;  
His empty chain above it leant,  
Such murder's fitting monument!

## VIII.

But he, the favourite and the flower,  
Most cherished since his natal hour, 165  
His mother's image in fair face,  
The infant love of all his race,  
His martyred father's dearest thought,  
My latest care, for whom I sought  
To hoard my life, that his might be 170  
Less wretched now, and one day free;  
He, too, who yet had held untired  
A spirit natural or inspired—  
He, too, was struck, and day by day  
Was withered on the stalk away. 175  
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing  
To see the human soul take wing  
In any shape, in any mood:—  
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,  
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180  
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,  
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed  
Of Sin delirious with its dread:  
But these were horrors—this was woe  
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow; 185  
He faded, and so calm and meek,  
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,  
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,  
And grieved for those he left behind;  
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190  
Was as a mockery of the tomb,  
Whose tints as gently sunk away  
As a departing rainbow's ray—  
An eye of most transparent light,  
That almost made the dungeon bright, 195



And not a word of murmur—not  
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—  
A little talk of better days,  
A little hope my own to raise,  
For I was sunk in silence—lost 200  
In this last loss, of all the most;  
And then the sighs he would suppress  
Of fainting nature's feebleness,  
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:  
I listened, but I could not hear— 205  
I called, for I was wild with fear;  
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread  
Would not be thus admonishèd;  
I called, and thought I heard a sound—  
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210  
And rushed to him:—I found him not,  
*I* only stirred in this black spot,  
*I* only lived—*I* only drew  
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;  
The last—the sole—the dearest link 215  
Between me and the eternal brink,  
Which bound me to my failing race,  
Was broken in this fatal place.  
One on the earth, and one beneath—  
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe; 220  
I took that hand which lay so still,  
Alas! my own was full as chill;  
I had not strength to stir, or strive,  
But felt that I was still alive—  
A frantic feeling, when we know 225  
That what we love shall ne'er be so.  
I know not why  
I could not die,

I had no earthly hope—but faith,  
And that forbade a selfish death.

230

## IX.

What next befell me then and there

I know not well—I never knew—

First came the loss of light and air,

And then of darkness too:

I had no thought, no feeling—none—

235

Among the stones I stood a stone,

And was, scarce conscious what I wist,

As shrubless crags within the mist;

For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,

It was not night—it was not day,

240

It was not even the dungeon-light,

So hateful to my heavy sight,

But vacancy absorbing space,

And fixedness—without a place;

There were no stars—no earth—no time—

245

No check—no change—no good—no crime—

But silence, and a stirless breath

Which neither was of life nor death;

A sea of stagnant idleness,

Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

250

## X.

A light broke in upon my brain,—

It was the carol of a bird;

It ceased, and then it came again,

The sweetest song ear ever heard,

And mine was thankful till my eyes

255

Ran over with the glad surprise,

And they that moment could not see

I was the mate of misery;

But then by dull degrees came back

My senses to their wonted track, 260

I saw the dungeon walls and floor

Close slowly round me as before,

I saw the glimmer of the sun

Creeping as it before had done,

But through the crevice where it came 265

That bird was perched, as fond and tame,

And tamer than upon the tree;

A lovely bird with azure wings,

And song that said a thousand things,

And seemed to say them all for me! 270

I never saw its like before,

I ne'er shall see its likeness more:

It seemed like me to want a mate;

But was not half so desolate,

And it was come to love me when 275

None lived to love me so again,

And cheering from my dungeon's brink,

Had brought me back to feel and think.

I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280

But knowing well captivity,

Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!

Or if it were, in wingèd guise,

A visitant from Paradise;

For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while 285

Which made me both to weep and smile;

I sometimes deemed that it might be

My brother's soul come down to me;

But then at last away it flew,

And then 'twas mortal—well I knew, 290  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone,—  
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone—as a solitary cloud,  
A single cloud on a sunny day, 295  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear  
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

## XI.

A kind of change came in my fate, 300  
My keepers grew compassionate;  
I know not what had made them so,  
They were inured to sights of woe,  
But so it was:—my broken chain  
With links unfastened did remain, 305  
And it was liberty to stride  
Along my cell from side to side,  
And up and down, and then athwart,  
And tread it over every part;  
And round the pillars one by one, 310  
Returning where my walk begun,  
Avoiding only, as I trod,  
My brothers' graves without a sod;  
For if I thought with heedless tread  
My step profaned their lowly bed, 315  
My breath came gaspingly and thick,  
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

## XII.

I made a footing in the wall,  
It was not therefrom to escape,  
For I had buried one and all 320  
Who loved me in a human shape;  
And the whole earth would henceforth be  
A wider prison unto me:  
No child—no sire—no kin had I,  
No partner in my misery; 325  
I thought of this, and I was glad,  
For thought of them had made me mad;  
But I was curious to ascend  
To my barred windows, and to bend  
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330  
The quiet of a loving eye.

## XIII.

I saw them—and they were the same,  
They were not changed like me in frame;  
I saw their thousand years of snow  
On high—their wide long lake below, 335  
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;  
I heard the torrents leap and gush  
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;  
I saw the white-walled distant town,  
And whiter sails go skimming down; 340  
And then there was a little isle,  
Which in my very face did smile,  
The only one in view;  
A small green isle it seemed no more,  
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor, 345  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,

And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers growing,  
    Of gentle breath and hue. 350  
The fish swam by the castle wall,  
And they seemed joyous each and all;  
The eagle rode the rising blast,  
Methought he never flew so fast  
As then to me he seemed to fly, 355  
And then new tears came in my eye,  
And I felt troubled—and would fain  
I had not left my recent chain;  
And when I did descend again,  
The darkness of my dim abode 360  
Fell on me as a heavy load;  
It was as is a new-dug grave,  
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—  
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,  
Had almost need of such a rest. 365

## XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,  
    I kept no count—I took no note,  
I had no hope my eyes to raise,  
    And clear them of their dreary mote;  
At last men came to set me free, 370  
    I asked not why, and recked not where,  
It was at length the same to me,  
Fettered or fetterless to be,  
    I learned to love despair.  
And thus when they appeared at last, 375  
And all my bonds aside were cast,  
These heavy walls to me had grown  
A hermitage—and all my own!

And half I felt as they were come  
To tear me from a second home: 380  
With spiders I had friendship made,  
And watched them in their sullen trade,  
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
And why should I feel less than they?  
We were all inmates of one place, 385  
And I, the monarch of each race,  
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!  
In quiet we had learned to dwell—  
My very chains and I grew friends,  
So much a long communion tends 390  
To make us what we are:—even I  
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

## MAZEPPA

### I.

'Twas after dread Pultowa's day,  
When fortune left the royal Swede,  
Around a slaughter'd army lay,  
No more to combat and to bleed.  
The power and glory of the war, 5  
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,  
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,  
And Moscow's walls were safe again,  
Until a day more dark and drear,  
And a more memorable year, 10  
Should give to slaughter and to shame  
A mightier host and haughtier name;  
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,  
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

### II.

Such was the hazard of the die; 15  
The wounded Charles was taught to fly  
By day and night through field and flood,  
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;  
For thousands fell that flight to aid:  
And not a voice was heard t' upbraid 20  
Ambition in his humbled hour,  
When truth had naught to dread from power.  
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave



His own—and died the Russians' slave.  
This too sinks after many a league 25  
Of well-sustain'd, but vain fatigue;  
And in the depth of forests darkling,  
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—

The beacons of surrounding foes—  
A king must lay his limbs at length. 30

Are these the laurels and repose  
For which the nations strain their strength?

They laid him by a savage tree,  
In outworn nature's agony;  
His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark— 35  
The heavy hour was chill and dark;  
The fever in his blood forbade  
A transient slumber's fitful aid:  
And thus it was; but yet through all,  
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall, 40  
And made, in this extreme of ill,  
His pangs the vassals of his will:  
All silent and subdued were they,  
As once the nations round him lay.

## III.

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few, 45  
Since but the fleeting of a day  
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true

And chivalrous: upon the clay  
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,  
Beside his monarch and his steed, 50  
For danger levels man and brute,

And all are fellows in their need.  
Among the rest, Mazeppa made  
His pillow in an old oak's shade—

Himself as rough, and scarce less old, 55  
 The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold.  
 But first, outspent with his long course,  
 The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,  
 And made for him a leafy bed,  
     And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,  
     And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,  
 And joy'd to see how well he fed;  
 For until now he had the dread  
 His wearied courser might refuse  
 To browse beneath the midnight dew: 65  
 But he was hardy as his lord,  
 And little cared for bed and board;  
 But spirited and docile too;  
 Whate'er was to be done, would do.  
 Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb, 70  
 All Tartar-like he carried him;  
 Obey'd his voice, and came to call,  
 And knew him in the midst of all:  
 Though thousands were around,—and Night,  
 Without a star, pursued her flight,— 75  
 That steed from sunset until dawn  
 His chief would follow like a fawn.

## IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,  
 And laid his lance beneath his oak,  
 Felt if his arms in order good 80  
 The long day's march had well withstood—  
 If still the powder fill'd the pan,  
     And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—  
 His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,  
 And whether they had chafed his belt— 85

And next the venerable man,  
From out his haversack and can,  
    Prepared and spread his slender stock;  
And to the monarch and his men  
The whole or portion offer'd then                   90  
With far less of inquietude  
Than courtiers at a banquet would.  
And Charles of this his slender share  
With smiles partook a moment there,  
To force of cheer a greater show,                   95  
And seem above both wounds and woe;—  
And then he said—"Of all our band,  
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,  
In skirmish, march, or forage, none  
Can less have said or more have done               100  
Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth  
So fit a pair had never birth,  
Since Alexander's days till now,  
As thy Bucephalus and thou:  
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield           105  
For pricking on o'er flood and field."  
Mazeppa answer'd—"Ill betide  
The school wherein I learned to ride!"  
Quoth Charles—"Old Hetman, wherefore so,  
Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?"       110  
Mazeppa said—"Twere long to tell;  
And we have many a league to go,  
With every now and then a blow,  
And ten to one at least the foe,  
Before our steeds may graze at ease               115  
Beyond the swift Borysthenes;  
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,  
And I will be the sentinel

Of this your troop.”—“But I request,”  
 Said Sweden’s monarch, “thou wilt tell 120  
 This tale of thine, and I may reap,  
 Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;  
 For at this moment from my eyes  
 The hope of present slumber flies.”

“Well, sire, with such a hope, I’ll track 125  
 My seventy years of memory back:  
 I think ’twas in my twentieth spring,—  
 Ay, ’twas,—when Casimir was king—  
 John Casimir,—I was his page  
 Six summers, in my earlier age. 130  
 A learned monarch, faith! was he,  
 And most unlike your majesty:  
 He made no wars and did not gain  
 New realms to lose them back again;  
 And (save debates in Warsaw’s diet) 135  
 He reign’d in most unseemly quiet;  
 Not that he had no cares to vex,  
 He loved the muses and the sex;  
 And sometimes these so froward are,  
 They made him wish himself at war; 140  
 But soon his wrath being o’er, he took  
 Another mistress, or new book.  
 And then he gave prodigious fêtes—  
 All Warsaw gather’d round his gates  
 To gaze upon his splendid court, 145  
 And dames, and chiefs, of princely port:  
 He was the Polish Solomon,  
 So sung his poets, all but one,  
 Who, being unpension’d, made a satire,  
 And boasted that he could not flatter. 150

It was a court of jousts and mimes,  
Where every courtier tried at rhymes;  
Even I for once produced some verses,  
And sign'd my odes 'Despairing Thyr sis.'  
There was a certain Palatine, 155  
    A count of far and high descent,  
Rich as a salt or silver mine;  
And he was proud, ye may divine,  
    As if from heaven he had been sent.  
He had such wealth in blood and ore 160  
    As few could match beneath the throne;  
And he would gaze upon his store,  
And o'er his pedigree would pore,  
Until by some confusion led,  
Which almost look'd like want of head, 165  
    He thought their merits were his own.  
His wife was not of his opinion—  
    His junior she by thirty years—  
Grew daily tired of his dominion;  
    And, after wishes, hopes, and fears, 170  
    To virtue a few farewell tears,  
A restless dream or two, some glances  
At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,  
Awaited but the usual chances,  
(Those happy accidents which render 175  
The coldest dames so very tender,)  
To deck her Count with titles given,  
'Tis said, as passports into heaven;  
But strange to say, they rarely boast  
Of these, who have deserved them most. 180

## V.

"I was a goodly stripling then;  
 At seventy years I so may say,  
 That there were few, or boys or men,  
 Who, in my dawning time of day,  
 Of vassal or of knight's degree, 185  
 Could vie in vanities with me;  
 For I had strength, youth, gaiety,  
 A port, not like to this ye see,  
 But as smooth as all is rugged now;  
 For time, and care, and war, have plough'd  
 My very soul from out my brow; 191  
 And thus I should be disavow'd  
 By all my kind and kin, could they  
 Compare my day and yesterday.  
 This change was wrought, too, long ere age 195  
 Had ta'en my features for his page:  
 With years, ye know, have not declined  
 My strength, my courage, or my mind,  
 Or at this hour I should not be  
 Telling old tales beneath a tree, 200  
 With starless skies my canopy.  
 But let me on: Theresa's form—  
 Methinks it glides before me now,  
 Between me and yon chestnut's bough,  
 The memory is so quick and warm; 205  
 And yet I find no words to tell  
 The shape of her I loved so well.  
 She had the Asiatic eye,  
 Such as our Turkish neighbourhood,  
 Hath mingled with our Polish blood, 210  
 Dark as above us is the sky;  
 But through it stole a tender light,

- Like the first moonrise of midnight;  
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,  
Which seem'd to melt to its own beam; 215  
All love, half languor, and half fire,  
Like saints that at the stake expire,  
And lift their raptured looks on high  
• As though it were a joy to die;—  
A brow like a midsummer lake, 220  
Transparent with the sun therein,  
When waves no murmur dare to make,  
And heaven beholds her face within;  
A cheek and lip—but why proceed?  
I loved her then—I love her still; 225  
And such as I am, love indeed  
In fierce extremes—in good and ill;  
But still we love even in our rage,  
And haunted to our very age  
With the vain shadow of the past,  
As is Mazeppa to the last. 230

## VI.

- “We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd,  
She did not speak, and yet replied:  
There are ten thousand tones and signs  
We hear and see, but none defines— 235  
Involuntary sparks of thought,  
Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought  
And form a strange intelligence  
Alike mysterious and intense,  
Which link the burning chain that binds, 240  
Without their will, young hearts and minds:  
Conveying, as the electric wire,  
We know not how, the absorbing fire.—

I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,  
And still reluctant distance kept, 245  
Until I was made known to her,  
And we might then and there confer  
Without suspicion—then, even then,  
I long'd, and was resolved to speak;  
But on my lips they died again, 250  
The accents tremulous and weak,  
Until one hour.—There is a game,  
A frivolous and foolish play,  
Wherewith we while away the day;  
It is—I have forgot the name— 255  
And we to this, it seems, were set,  
By some strange chance, which I forget:  
I reck'd not if I won or lost,  
It was enough for me to be  
So near to hear, and oh! to see 260  
The being whom I loved the most.  
I watch'd her as a sentinel,  
(May ours this dark night watch as well!)  
Until I saw, and thus it was,  
That she was pensive, nor perceived 265  
Her occupation, nor was grieved  
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still  
Play'd on for hours, as if her will  
Yet bound her to the place, though not  
That hers might be the winning lot. 270  
Then through my brain the thought did pass  
Even as a flash of lightning there,  
That there was something in her air  
Which would not doom me to despair;  
And on the thought my words broke forth, 275  
All incoherent as they were—



Their eloquence was little worth,  
 But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—  
 Who listens once will listen twice;  
 Her heart, be sure, is not of ice, 280  
 And one refusal no rebuff.

## VII.

"I loved, and was beloved again—  
 They tell me, sire, you never knew  
 Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,  
 I shorten all my joy or pain; 285  
 To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;  
 But all men are not born to reign,  
 Or o'er their passions, or as you  
 Thus o'er themselves and nations too.  
 I am—or rather *was*—a prince, 290  
 A chief of thousands, and could lead  
 Them on where each would foremost bleed;  
 But could not o'er myself evince  
 The like control.—But to resume:  
 I loved, and was beloved again; 295  
 In sooth, it is a happy doom,  
 But yet where happiest ends in pain.—  
 We met in secret, and the hour  
 Which led me to that lady's bower  
 Was fiery Expectation's dower. 300  
 My days and nights were nothing—all  
 Except that hour which doth recall  
 In the long lapse from youth to age  
 No other like itself—I'd give  
 The Ukraine back again to live 305  
 It o'er once more—and be a page,  
 The happy page, who was the lord

Of one soft heart and his own sword,  
 And had no other gem nor wealth  
 Save nature's gift of youth and health.— 310  
 We met in secret—doubly sweet,  
 Some say, they find it so to meet;  
 I know not that—I would have given  
     My life but to have call'd her mine  
 In the full view of earth and heaven; 315  
     For I did oft and long repine  
 That we could only meet by stealth.

## VIII.

“For lovers there are many eyes,  
     And such there were on us;—the devil  
     On such occasions should be civil— 320  
 The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,  
     It might be some untoward saint,  
 Who would not be at rest too long  
     But to his pious bile gave vent—  
 But one fair night, some lurking spies 325  
 Surprised and seized us both.  
 The Count was something more than wroth—  
     I was unarm'd; but if in steel,  
 All cap-à-pie from head to heel,  
 What 'gainst their numbers could I do?— 330  
 'Twas near his castle, far away  
     From city or from succour near,  
 And almost on the break of day;  
 I did not think to see another,  
     My moments seem'd reduced to few; 335  
 And with one prayer to Mary Mother,  
     And, it may be, a saint or two,  
 As I resign'd me to my fate,

They led me to the castle gate:  
Theresa's doom I never knew, 340  
Our lot was henceforth separate—  
An angry man, ye may opine,  
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;  
And he had good reason to be,  
But he was most enraged lest such 345  
An accident should chance to touch  
Upon his future pedigree;  
Nor less amazed, that such a blot  
His noble 'scutcheon should have got,  
While he was highest of his line; 350  
Because unto himself he seem'd  
The first of men, nor less he deem'd  
In others' eyes, and most in mine.  
'Sdeath! with a *page*—perchance a king  
Had reconciled him to the thing; 355  
But with a stripling of a page—  
I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

## IX.

“ ‘Bring forth the horse!’—the horse was brought;  
In truth, he was a noble steed,  
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed, 360  
Who look'd as though the speed of thought  
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,  
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,  
With spur and bridle undefiled—  
'Twas but a day he had been caught;  
And snorting, with erected mane, 365  
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,  
In the full foam of wrath and dread  
To me the desert-born was led.

They bound me on, that menial throng, 370  
 Upon his back with many a thong;  
 They loosed him with a sudden lash—  
 Away!—away!—and on we dash!—  
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.

## X.

‘Away!—away!—My breath was gone— 375  
 I saw not where he hurried on:  
 ’Twas scarcely yet the break of day,  
 And on he foam’d—away!—away!—  
 The last of human sounds which rose,  
 As I was darted from my foes, 380  
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,  
 Which on the wind came roaring after  
 A moment from that rabble rout:  
 With sudden wrath I wrench’d my head,  
 And snapp’d the cord, which to the mane 385  
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,  
 And writhing half my form about,  
 Howl’d back my curse; but ’midst the tread,  
 The thunder of my courser’s speed,  
 Perchance they did not hear nor heed: 390  
 It vexes me—for I would fain  
 Have paid their insult back again.  
 I paid it well in after days:  
 There is not of that castle gate,  
 Its drawbridge and portcullis’ weight, 395  
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;  
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass,  
 Save what grows on a ridge of wall,  
 Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;  
 And many a time ye there might pass, 400

Nor dream that e'er that fortress was:  
 I saw its turrets in a blaze,  
 Their crackling battlements all cleft,  
     And the hot lead pour down like rain  
 From off the scorch'd and blackening roof, 405  
 Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.  
 They little thought that day of pain,  
 When launch'd, as on the lightning's flash  
 They bade me to destruction dash,  
     That one day I should come again, 410  
 With twice five thousand horse, to thank  
     The Count for his uncourteous ride.  
 They play'd me then a bitter prank,  
     When, with the wild horse for my guide  
 They bound me to his foaming flank: 415  
 At length I play'd them one as frank—  
 For time at last sets all things even—  
     And if we do but watch the hour,  
     There never yet was human power  
 Which could evade, if unforgiven, 420  
 The patient search and vigil long  
 Of him who treasures up a wrong.

## XI.

"Away, away, my steed and I,  
 Upon the pinions of the wind.  
     All human dwellings left behind; 425  
 We sped like meteors through the sky,  
 When with its crackling sound the night  
 Is chequer'd with the northern light.  
 Town—village—none were on our track,  
     But a wild plain of far extent, 430  
 And bounded by a forest black

And, save the scarce seen battlement  
 On distant heights of some strong hold,  
 Against the Tartars built of old,  
 No trace of man: the year before 435  
 A Turkish army had marched o'er;  
 And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,  
 The verdure flies the bloody sod.  
 The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,  
 And a low breeze crept moaning by— 440  
 I could have answer'd with a sigh—  
 But fast we fled, away, away—  
 And I could neither sigh nor pray;  
 And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain  
 Upon the courser's bristling mane; 445  
 But, snorting still with rage and fear,  
 He flew upon his far career.  
 At times I almost thought, indeed,  
 He must have slacken'd in his speed;  
 But no—my bound and slender frame 450  
 Was nothing to his angry might,  
 And merely like a spur became:  
 Each motion which I made to free  
 My swoln limbs from their agony  
 Increased his fury and affright: 455  
 I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,  
 But yet he swerved as from a blow;  
 And, starting to each accent, sprang  
 As from a sudden trumpet's clang.  
 Meantime my cords were wet with gore, 460  
 Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;  
 And in my tongue the thirst became  
 A something fierier far than flame.

## XII.

"We near'd the wild wood—'twas so wide,  
I saw no bounds on either side; 465

'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,  
That bent not to the roughest breeze  
Which howls down from Siberia's waste  
And strips the forest in its haste,—  
But these were few and far between, 470  
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,  
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,  
Ere strown by those autumnal eves

That nip the forest's foliage dead,  
Discolour'd with a lifeless red, 475  
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore  
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,  
And some long winter's night hath shed  
Its frost o'er every tombless head,  
So cold, and stark the raven's beak 480  
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek.

'Twas a wild waste of underwood,  
And here and there a chestnut stood,  
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;  
But far apart—and well it were, 485  
Or else a different lot were mine—

The boughs gave way, and did not tear  
My limbs; and I found strength to bear  
My wounds already scarr'd with cold—  
My bonds forbade to loose my hold. 490  
We rustled through the leaves like wind,  
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;  
By night I heard them on the track,  
Their troop came hard upon our back,  
With their long gallop which can tire 495

The hound's deep hate and hunter's fire:  
 Where'er we flew they follow'd on,  
 Nor left us with the morning sun;  
 Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,  
 At day-break winding through the wood, 500  
 And through the night had heard their feet  
 Their stealing, rustling, step repeat.  
 Oh! how I wished for spear or sword,  
 At least to die amidst the horde,  
 And perish—if it must be so— 505  
 At bay, destroying many a foe.  
 When first my courser's race begun,  
 I wish'd the goal already won;  
 But now I doubted strength and speed.  
 Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed 510  
 Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;  
 Nor faster falls the blinding snow.  
 Which whelms the peasant near the door  
 Whose threshold he shall cross no more,  
 Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,  
 Than through the forest-paths he past—  
 Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;  
 All furious as a favour'd child  
 Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—  
 A woman piqued—who has her will. 520

## XIII.

"The wood was past; 'twas more than noon,  
 But chill the air although in June;  
 Or it might be my veins ran cold—  
 Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;  
 And I was then not what I seem, 525  
 But headlong as a wintry stream,



And wore my feelings out before  
I well could count their causes o'er.  
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,  
The tortures which beset my path, 530  
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,  
Thus bound in nature's nakedness,  
(Sprung from a race whose rising blood  
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,  
And trodden hard upon, is like 535  
The rattle-snake's in act to strike,)  
What marvel if this worn-out trunk  
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?  
The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,  
I seem'd to sink upon the ground; 540  
But erred, for I was fastly bound.  
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,  
And throb'd awhile, then beat no more:  
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;  
I saw the trees like drunkards reel, 545  
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,  
Which saw no farther: he who dies  
Can die no more than then I died.  
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,  
I felt the blackness come and go, 550  
And strove to wake; but could not make  
My senses climb up from below:  
I felt as on a plank at sea,  
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,  
At the same time upheave and overwhelm, 555  
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.  
My undulating life was as  
The fancied lights that flitting pass  
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when

Fever begins upon the brain; 560  
 But soon it pass'd, with little pain,  
     But a confusion worse than such:  
     I own that I should deem it much,  
 Dying, to feel the same again;  
 And yet I do suppose we must 565  
 Feel far more ere we turn to dust:  
 No matter; I have bared my brow  
 Full in Death's face—before—and now.

## XIV.

“My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,  
     And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse 570  
 Life reassumed its lingering hold,  
 And throb by throb: till grown a pang  
 Which for a moment would convulse,  
     My blood reflow'd though thick and chill;  
 My ear with uncouth noises rang, 575  
     My heart began once more to thrill;  
 My sight return'd, though dim, alas!  
 And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.  
 Methought the dash of waves was high:  
 There was a gleam too of the sky, 580  
 Studded with stars;—it is no dream;  
 The wild horse swims the wilder stream!  
 The bright broad river's gushing tide  
 Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,  
 And we are half-way, struggling o'er 585  
 To yon unknown and silent shore.  
 The waters broke my hollow trance,  
     And with a temporary strength  
     My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.  
 My courser's broad breast proudly braves 590

And dashes off the ascending waves,  
And onward we advance!

We reach the slippery shore at length  
A haven I but little prized,  
For all behind was dark and drear, 595  
And all before was night and fear.  
How many hours of night or day  
In those suspended pangs I lay,  
I could not tell; I scarcely knew  
If this were human breath I drew. 600

## xv.

"With glossy skin, and dripping mane,  
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,  
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain  
Up the repelling bank.  
We gain the top: a boundless plain 605  
Spreads through the shadow of the night,  
And onward, onward, onward, seems,  
Like precipices in our dreams,  
To stretch beyond the sight;  
And here and there a speck of white, 610  
Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,  
In masses broke into the light,  
As rose the moon upon my right.  
But nought distinctly seen  
In the dim waste would indicate 615  
The omen of a cottage gate;  
No twinkling taper from afar  
Stood like a hospitable star;  
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose  
To make him merry with my woes: 620  
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!

Although detected, welcome still,  
 Reminding me, through every ill,  
 Of the abodes of men.

## XVI.

“ Onward we went—but slack and slow;                   625  
     His savage force at length o’erspent,  
 The drooping courser, faint and low,  
     All feebly foaming went.  
 A sickly infant had had power  
 To guide him forward in that hour;                   630  
     But useless all to me.  
 His new-born tameness nought avail’d—  
 My limbs were bound; my force had fail’d,  
     Perchance, had they been free.  
 With feeble effort still I tried                   635  
 To rend the bonds so starkly tied—  
     But still it was in vain;  
 My limbs were only wrung the more,  
 And soon the idle strife gave o’er,  
     Which but prolong’d their pain.                   640  
 The dizzy race seem’d almost done,  
 Although no goal was nearly won:  
 Some streaks announced the coming sun—  
     How slow, alas! he came!  
 Methought that mist of dawning gray                   645  
 Would never dapple into day;  
 How heavily it roll’d away—  
     Before the eastern flame  
 Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,  
 And called the radiance from their cars,                   650  
 And fill’d the earth, from his deep throne,  
 With lonely lustre, all his own.

## XVII.

“Up rose the sun; the mists were curl’d  
Back from the solitary world  
Which lay around—behind—before; 655  
What boot’d it to traverse o’er  
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,  
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,  
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;  
No sign of travel—none of toil; 660  
The very air was mute;  
And not an insect’s shrill small horn,  
Nor matin bird’s new voice was borne  
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,  
Panting as if his heart would burst, 665  
The weary brute still stagger’d on;  
And still we were—or seem’d—alone.  
At length, while reeling on our way,  
Methought I heard a courser neigh  
From out yon tuft of blackening firs. 670  
Is it the wind those branches stirs?  
No, no! from out the forest prance  
A trampling troop; I see them come!  
In one vast squadron they advance!  
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb. 675  
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;  
But where are they the reins to guide?  
A thousand horse—and none to ride!  
With flowing tail, and flying mane,  
Wide nostrils—never stretch’d by pain, 680  
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,  
And feet that iron never shod,  
And flanks unscarr’d by spur or rod,  
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,

Like waves that follow o'er the sea,  
Came thickly thundering on, 685  
As if our faint approach to meet.  
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,  
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,  
A moment, with a faint low neigh,  
He answer'd, and then fell;  
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,  
And reeking limbs immoveable;  
His first and last career is done!  
On came the troop—they saw him stoop, 695  
They saw me strangely bound along  
His back with many a bloody thong:  
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,  
Gallop a moment here and there,  
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,  
Then plunging back with sudden bound,  
Headed by one black mighty steed  
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,  
Without a single speck or hair  
Of white upon his shaggy hide. 705  
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,  
And backward to the forest fly,  
By instinct, from a human eye.—  
They left me there to my despair,  
Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch, 710  
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,  
Relieved from that unwonted weight,  
From whence I could not extricate  
Nor him nor me—and there we lay  
The dying on the dead! 715  
I little deem'd another day  
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

“ And there from morn till twilight bound,  
I felt the heavy hours toil round,  
With just enough of life to see 720

My last of suns go down on me,  
In hopeless certainty of mind,  
That makes us feel at length resign’d  
To that which our foreboding years  
Presents the last and worst of fears 725

Inevitable—even a boon,

Nor more unkind for coming soon;  
Yet shunn’d and dreaded with such care,  
As if it only were a snare

That prudence might escape: 730

At times both wish’d for and implored,  
At times sought with self-pointed sword,  
Yet still a dark and hideous close  
To even intolerable woes,

And welcome in no shape. 735

And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,  
They who revell’d beyond measure  
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,  
Die calm, or calmer oft than he  
Whose heritage was misery: 740

For he who hath in turn run through  
All that was beautiful and new,

Hath nought to hope; and nought to leave;  
And, save the future, (which is viewed  
Not quite as men are base or good, 745  
But as their nerves may be endued,)

With nought perhaps to grieve:—

The wretch still hopes his woes must end,  
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,  
Appears, to his distemper’d eyes, 750

Arrived to rob him of his prize,  
 The tree of his new Paradise.  
 To-morrow would have given him all,  
 Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;  
 To-morrow would have been the first 755  
 Of days no more deplored or curst,  
 But bright, and long, and beckoning years,  
 Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,  
 Guerdon of many a painful hour;  
 To-morrow would have given him power 760  
 To rule, to shine, to smight, to save—  
 And must it dawn upon his grave?

## XVIII.

“The sun was sinking—still I lay  
 Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;  
 I thought to mingle there our clay; 765  
 And my dimb eyes of death had need,  
 No hope arose of being freed.  
 I cast my last looks up the sky,  
 And there between me and the sun  
 I saw the expecting raven fly, 770  
 Who scarce would wait till both should die  
 Ere his repast begun.  
 He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,  
 And each time nearer than before;  
 I saw his wing through twilight flit, 775  
 And once so near me he alit  
 I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;  
 But the slight motion of my hand,  
 And feeble scratching of the sand,  
 The exerted throat's faint struggling noise, 780  
 Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,



Together scared him off at length.—  
I know no more—my latest dream  
Is something of a lovely star  
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar, 785  
And went and came with wandering beam,  
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense  
Sensation of recurring sense,  
And then subsiding back to death,  
And then again a little breath, 790  
A little thrill, a short suspense,  
An icy sickness curdling o'er  
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—  
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,  
A sigh, and nothing more. 795

## XIX.

“I woke—Where was I?—Do I see  
A human face look down on me?  
And doth a roof above me close?  
Do these limbs on a couch repose?  
Is this a chamber where I lie? 800  
And is it mortal, yon bright eye  
That watches me with gentle glance?  
I closed my own again once more,  
As doubtful that the former trance  
Could not as yet be o'er. 805  
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,  
Sate watching by the cottage wall:  
The sparkle of her eye I caught,  
Even with my first return of thought;  
For ever and anon she threw 810  
A prying, pitying glance on me  
With her black eyes so wild and free.

I gazed, and gazed, until I knew  
     No vision it could be,—  
 But that I lived, and was released 815  
 From adding to the vulture's feast.  
 And when the Cossack maid beheld  
 My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,  
 She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,  
     But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made 820  
     With lip and finger signs that said,  
 I must not strive as yet to break  
 The silence, till my strength should be  
 Enough to leave my accents free;  
 And then her hand on mine she laid, 825  
 And smooth'd the pillow for my head,  
 And stole along on tiptoe tread,  
     And gently oped the door, and spake  
 In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!  
 Even music follow'd her light feet;— 830  
     But those she call'd were not awake,  
 And she went forth; but ere she pass'd,  
 Another look on me she cast,  
     Another sign she made, to say,  
 That I had naught to fear, that all 835  
 Were near at my command or call,  
     And she would not delay  
 Her due return:—while she was gone,  
 Methought I felt too much alone.

## XX

"She came with mother and with sire— 840  
 What need of more?—I will not tire  
 With long recital of the rest,  
 Since I became the Cossack's guest.

They found me senseless on the plain—  
They bore me to the nearest hut— 845  
They brought me into life again—  
Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!  
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut  
His rage, refining on my pain,  
Sent me forth to the wilderness, 850  
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,  
To pass the desert to a throne,—  
What mortal his own doom may guess?—  
Let none despond, let none despair!  
To-morrow the Borysthenes 855  
May see our coursers graze at ease  
Upon his Turkish bank,—and never  
Had I such welcome for a river  
As I shall yield when safely there.  
Comrades, good night!"—The Hetman threw  
His length beneath the oak-tree shade, 861  
With leafy couch already made,  
A bed nor comfortless nor new  
To him who took his rest whene'er  
The hour arrived, no matter where: 865  
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.  
And if ye marvel Charles forgot  
To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not,—  
The king had been an hour asleep.

## ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,  
Since others it hath ceased to move:  
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,  
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;  
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker, and the grief  
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys  
Is lone as some volcanic isle;  
No torch is kindled at its blaze—  
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,  
The exalted portion of the pain  
And power of love I cannot share,  
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—  
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,  
Where glory decks the hero's bier,  
Or binds his brow.

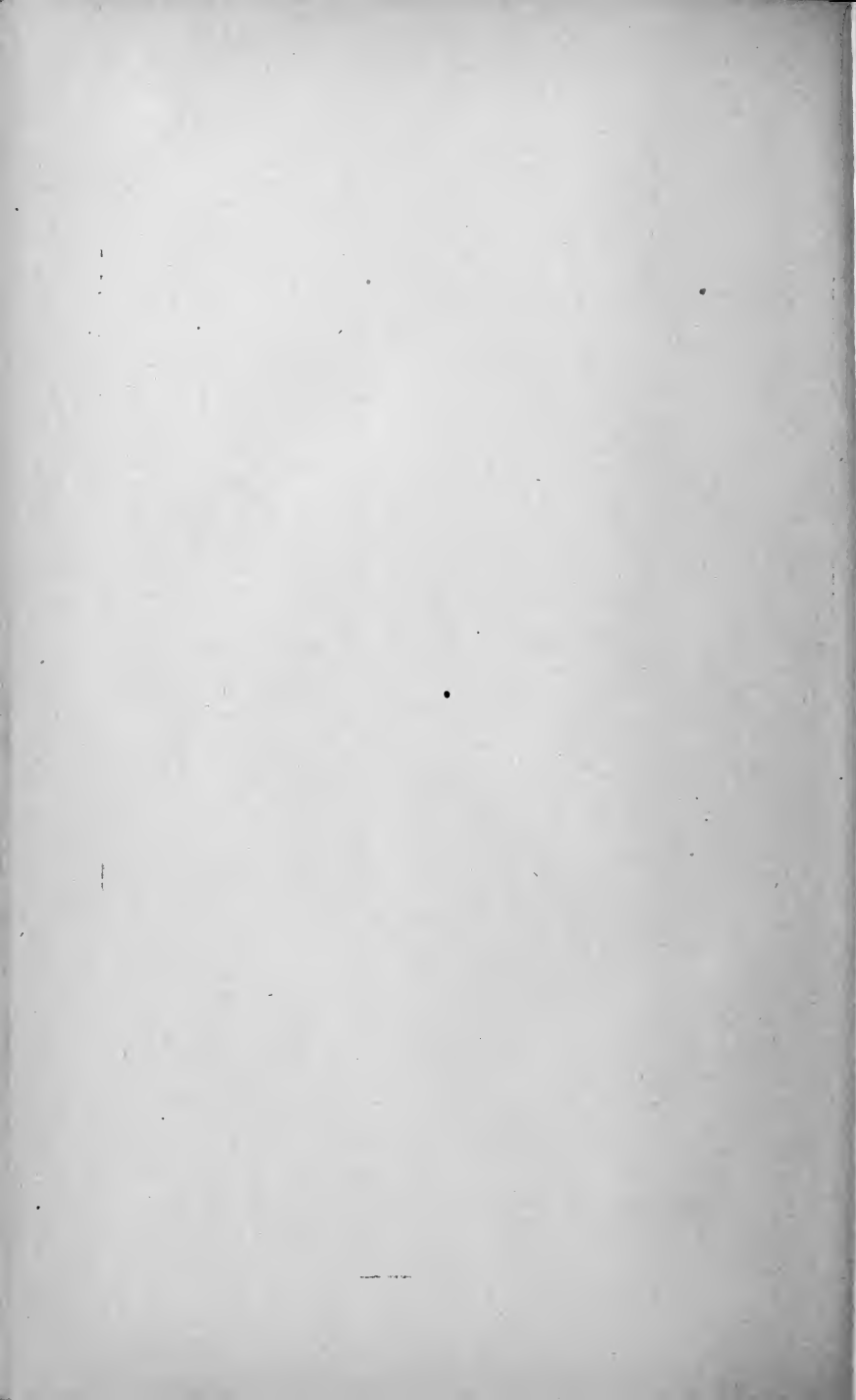
The sword, the banner, and the field,  
 Glory and Greece, around me see!  
 The Spartan, borne upon his shield,  
 Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)  
 Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*  
 Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,  
 And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,  
 Unworthy manhood—unto thee  
 Indifferent should the smile or frown  
 Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live*  
 The land of honorable death  
 Is here;—up to the field, and give  
 Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—  
 A soldier's grave, for thee the best;  
 Then look around, and choose thy ground,  
 And take thy rest.



## NOTES

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### CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO FOURTH.

THE Fourth and last Canto of *Childe Harold* was begun June 26, 1817, and finished in first draft, twenty-four days later. Alterations were made and stanzas added from time to time until its publication in April, 1818. The first two cantos of the poem had been written in 1809-10, when Byron was abroad; and these, in describing the adventures of an imaginary hero (Childe Harold), had given Byron the opportunity to record the effect upon his mind of the picturesque scenes of his travels in the Mediterranean and the famous events with which these scenes were associated. When, in 1816, he left England, for the second and last time, he turned again to *Childe Harold*, and the Third Canto records his impressions on the Field of Waterloo, on the Rhine, and in Switzerland. This canto is more directly personal than the earlier ones, and gives expression to the tumult of emotions with which the embittered poet now faced a hostile world. Never before had Byron written with greater power or more complete mastery of his art.

In the Fourth Canto Byron found a new field. In comparing it with the earlier cantos, he wrote, "it treats more of works of art than of nature. . . . I have parted company with Shelley and Wordsworth. Subject matter and treatment are alike new." Wordsworth's worship of nature had had a manifest influence on the Third Canto; so too had the idealism of Shelley, who was Byron's companion in Switzerland. Now the scene is transferred to Italy, and Byron's companion, Hobhouse, to whom he dedicated the canto, aided in turning the poet's thought to art and history. The Fourth Canto, however, continues, like the Third, to give Byron's own personal impressions and feelings, with only a passing reference to the imaginary pilgrim, Childe Harold. It deals with Byron's impressions of Italy, and mingles its descriptions of famous works of art with outpourings of his own pride and passion. It begins at Venice and then carries us to Arqua, Ferrara, Florence, Lake Thrasimene, Fo-

ligno, Terni, and on to Rome; and it describes the famous scenes, monuments and sculptures of these places. The poet, however, often makes an abrupt transition from the object described to the reflections it suggests to his own mind.

The following outline of Canto IV. is from the complete edition of *Childe Harold* by Dr. Rolfe, who credits the French editor of the poem, Dr. Darmesteter, with the original scheme.

- I.-XVIII. Venice.
- XIX.-XXIV. Imagination and Memory.
- XXV., XXVI. The Beauty of Italy even in Ruins.
- XXVII.-XXIX. An Italian Sunset.
- XXX.-XXXIV. Arqua and Petrarch.
- XXXV.-XXXIX. Ferrara and Tasso.
- XL., XLI. Ariosto.
- XLII., XLIII. Apostrophe to Italy (Filicaja's Sonnet).
- XLIV.-XLVII. Sulpicius and the Downfall of Rome.
- XLVIII. Florence.
- XLIX.-LIII. The Venus de' Medici.
- LIV.-LVI. Santa Croce and its Dead.
- LVII.-LIX. Dante and Boccaccio.
- LX. The Tombs of the Medici and the Graves of the Poets.
- LXI. Art and Nature.
- LXII.-LXV. Lake Thrasimene.
- LXVI.-LXVIII. Clitumnus and its Temple.
- LXIX.-LXXII. The Fall of Terni.
- LXXIII.-LXXVII. The Apennines; Soracte and Horace.
- LXXVIII.-LXXXII. Rome and her Ruins.
- LXXXIII.-LXXXVI. Sylla and Cromwell.
- LXXXVII. The Statue of Pompey.
- LXXXVIII. The Wolf of the Capitol.
- LXXXIX.-XCII. Cæsar and Napoleon.
- XCIII.-XCVII. The Reaction of 1815.
- XCVIII. The Coming Triumph of Freedom.
- XCIX.-CV. The Tomb of Cæcilia Metella.
- CVI.-CIX. The Ruins of the Palatine Hill.
- CX., CXI. The Columns of Phocas and of Trajan.
- CXII.-CXIV. The Capitol; the Forum; Rienzi.
- CXV.-CXIX. Egeria and her Fountain.
- CXX.-CXXVII. Love; its Ideals and its Realities.
- CXXVIII.-CXLV. The Coliseum; Byron's Imprecation and Forgiveness of his Enemies; the Dying Gladiator.
- CXLVI., CXLVII. The Pantheon.
- CXLVIII.-CLI. The Legend of the Roman Daughter.



CLII. The Mausoleum of Hadrian.

CLIII.-CLIX. St. Peter's.

CLX. The Laocoön.

CLXI.-CLXIII. The Apollo Belvidere.

CLXIV.-CLXVI. Childe Harold recalled.

CLXVII.-CLXXII. The Death of the Princess Charlotte.

CLXXIII.-CLXXVI. Lakes Nemi and Albano; the view from the Alban Mount.

CLXXVII.-CLXXXIV. Apostrophe to the Ocean.

CLXXXV., CLXXXVI. The End of the Song and the Poet's Farewell.

**1. I stood in Venice.** On December 5, 1816, Byron wrote to Thomas Moore, the English poet, "I have not yet sinned against it (Venice) in verse, nor do I mean to do so." In June, 1817, however, he began this canto of *Childe Harold*, and he did not sin in writing about Venice, for Canto Four contains some of Byron's best work. But we should remember Ruskin's words that the Venice of Byron is not the real Venice, but "a thing of yesterday, a mere efflorescence of decay, a stage dream which the first ray of daylight must dissipate into dust." (*Stones of Venice*, I. ii. 2.).

**Bridge of Sighs.** A covered bridge leading from the Ducal Palace over a canal to the State Prison. Byron, very naturally, conceived this bridge as emblematic of the despotic power of arbitrary rulers. It is, says Ruskin, "the centre of the Byronic ideal of Venice."

**8. the winged Lion.** The Lion of St. Mark on the top of a column in the *Piazza di San Marco*, standing guard over the chief square of Venice, is the emblem of Venice.

**9. hundred isles.** Venice is built on 117 islands of various sizes.

**10. a sea Cybele.** Cybele was an earth-goddess of the Phrygians, but Byron, drawing his image from a Venetian historian, makes her a sea-goddess, and conceives her as rising, with a turreted crown, from the sea.

**19. Tasso's echoes.** Previous to the extinction of the Venetian Republic in 1797 the gondoliers of Venice would rival one another in capping stanzas from a corrupted form of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, a poem recounting the story of the first crusade.

**27. masque.** A masquerade or carnival.

**31. dogeless.** Doge, from the Italian *ducem*, a leader, was the name given to the chief magistrate of the ancient republic of Venice prior to 1797.

**33. Rialto.** The famous bridge across the Grand Canal originally the centre of commerce and trade.

**33, 34. Shylock—The Moor—Pierre.** Referring respectively to the characters in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*, and in Otway's *Venice Preserved*.

**47. The first from Hope.** Ernest Hartley Coleridge makes the following note, quoting first the lines from *Don Juan*, xiv: x:

"In youth I wrote because my mind was full,  
And now because I feel it growing dull."

"In youth the poet takes refuge in the ideal world, from the crowd and pressure of blissful possibilities; and in age, when hope is beyond hope, he peoples the solitude with beings of the mind."

**64. I've taught me other tongues.** Though Byron learned to speak Italian like a native, and later in life at times adopted the Greek national dress, he never forgot that he was an Englishman. Such an outburst of patriotism, however, is rare in his poetry.

**85. Spartan's epitaph.** The mother of Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, so replied to the strangers who praised the memory of her son.

**91. The spouseless Adriatic.** On each Ascension Day the Doge of Venice wedded the Adriatic to the city by casting a ring into the sea from the state galley, the *Bucentaur*, thus indicating the supremacy of the Venetian Republic over the sea. After 1798, when the Republic became a part of Austria, the ancient custom was abandoned. Read Wordsworth's "Sonnet on Venice."

**97. the proud Place.** *The Piazza di San Marco*, where the Lion of St. Mark stood guard over the city. Here, in front of the Cathedral, the German Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, called "the Suabian," because he was of the house of Suabia, made submission in 1177 to Alexander III.

**100. the Austrian reigns.** Venice was taken from Austria, and was finally ceded to Italy in 1866 as a part of United Italy.

**106. lauwine.** The German word for avalanche.

**107. Dandolo.** Henry Dandolo, Doge of Venice from 1192 to 1205, was the leader of the Venetians at the taking of Constantinople in 1204. He was ninety-seven years of age at the time.

**109. steeds of brass.** The bronze horses of heroic size, now standing over the portal of St. Mark's in Venice, were brought from Constantinople by Dandolo. Originally they belonged to Rome, whence Constantine brought them to Constantinople. In 1797 Napoleon took them to Paris to adorn the Arch of the Carrousel; but in 1815, after the battle of Waterloo, they were restored to Venice.

**111. Doria's menace.** In 1397, when the Venetians were over-  
come by their commercial rivals, the Genoese, they sued for peace; stipulating, however, that they should keep their independence.

In answer to this plea, the leader of the Genoese, Pietro Doria, is reputed to have said, "Ye shall have no peace until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, which are upon the porch of your evangelist St. Mark."

**113. thirteen hundred years of freedom.** "The foundation of Venice dates from the invasion of Italy by the Huns under Attila, A.D. 452, when many of the inhabitants of the neighboring districts took refuge in the islands in the lagoons."—TOZZER.

**114-117. Sinks.** The buildings of Venice rest on piles sunk into the sea. Apparently there must have been some fear that the settling of the buildings would ultimately lead to their being engulfed by the sea.

**118. Tyre.** The first of the great maritime cities.

**120. The 'Planter of the Lion.'** "That is, the Lion of St. Mark, the standard of the Republic, which is the origin of the word *Pantaloon*, Piantaleone, Pantaleon, Pantaloon."—BYRON. Byron's fanciful etymology—'pianta-leon,' 'planter of the lion,' the lion of St. Mark's being the emblem of the city, is more poetical than philological. In all probability the word comes from St. Pantaleone, a patron saint of Venice, whose name signifies 'wholly lion.' The Venetians were dubbed "Pantaroni" by other Italians.

**123. Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite.** Venice, as the chief power between the East and the West, guarded Europe from the Ottoman Turks. Cf. Wordsworth's Sonnet, *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*:

"Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee,  
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth  
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,—  
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.  
She was a maiden city, bright and free;  
No guile seduced, no force could violate;  
And when she took unto herself a Mate,  
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.  
And what if she had seen those glories fade,  
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay:  
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
When her long life hath reached its final day:  
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
Of that which once was great is passed away."

**124. Troy's rival, Candia.** Troy was besieged by the Greeks for ten years, but Candia, in Crete, was besieged by the Turks and defended by the Venetians for twenty-four years (1645-1669).

**125. Lepanto's fight.** Lepanto, near the Gulf of Corinth, Greece, was the scene of a decisive victory over the Turks, October 7, 1571, by a league of Christians, among whom the Venetians were conspicuous for their bravery.

**133. streets.** Though the canals of Venice are the main highways of travel, there are many narrow streets in the city.

**foreign aspects.** The Austrians. Byron is, of course, comparing the departed glory of Venice with the mock glory of the Austrian occupation.

**136. When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse.** When the Athenians attempted to take Syracuse they were defeated, and many taken captives. Some of the captives redeemed themselves by singing verses from Euripides, whose dramas were popular in Sicily.

**141. o'ermastered victor.** A figure of speech called an oxymoron, in which an epithet of quite an opposite significance is added to a word.

**142. scimitar.** An anachronism—an error in point of time.

**145-149.** Even if all else were forgotten, the memory of Tasso's songs, sung by the gondoliers, ought to have been a reminder of the proud past of Venice sufficient to save her from her humiliating slavery:—this is Byron's extravagant way of protesting against the Austrian rule.

**150. shameful to the nations.** The nations that by the treaty of Paris, 1814, had permitted Venice to fall back into the hands of Austria.

**153. thy watery wall.** Cf. *Richard II*, II. i. 46, where John of Gaunt describes England:

"This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands."

**158. Otway.** Thomas Otway (1651-1685) was the author of the drama, *Venice Preserved*.

**Radcliffe.** Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1764-1823) was the popular author of many thrilling romantic tales, chief among which was *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Byron admired her works and was indebted to her for many suggestions. See lines 3 and 4 in stanza 1.

**Schiller.** J. C. F. von Schiller (1759-1805), the great German writer, was the author of *Der Geisterseher* (The Ghostseer), or the *Armenian*, the scene of which is laid at Venice. "This (the Doge's palace) was the thing that most struck my imagination in Venice—more than the Rialto, which I visited for the sake of Shylock; more, too, than Schiller's *Armenian*, a novel which took great hold of me when a boy." (Byron's note.)

**Shakespeare's art.** His *Othello* and *Merchant of Venice*.

**172. tannen.** Byron, who admitted that he did not know German, evidently thought that tannen was a particular kind of fir tree, whereas the word is the plural of *tanne*—a fir tree, a general term.

215. The cold, the changed, etc. Cf. Scott's *Lady of the Lake*,  
I. 33.

"Again his soul he interchanged  
With friends whose hearts were long estranged,  
They come in dim procession led,  
The cold, the faithless and the dead."

**Stanza XXV.** In the spring of 1817 Byron made a pilgrimage of the principal Italian cities, including Arqua, Ferrara, Florence, and Rome, noted for their historic, artistic, and literary interest.

**226. The commonwealth of kings.** The Republic of Rome was, theoretically speaking, a government instituted and conducted by the people. Byron may have had in mind the story of the ambassador of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, who, on returning from an unsuccessful mission to the Romans, told his master that the Roman senate was a "Council of Kings."

**238. Friuli's mountains.** The Alps northeast of Venice. Byron's view is, consequently, not directly toward the setting sun, but his description may be applied to the reflection made in that direction. Tozer makes the following interesting note: "The point of view is the mainland opposite Venice, where the river Brenta enters the sea. This is the nearest approach toward painting that can be found in the poem; but it avoids the faults of that mode of description—which is an encroachment on the painter's art, and attempt to do what painters can do better—by omitting detail, and by describing what is seen in succession of time, which the painter cannot do."

**240. Iris.** The personification of the rainbow.

**242. Dian.** Diana, goddess of the moon. Here the "meek Dian's crest" refers to "the pale crescent moon" as in contrast with the gorgeous colors of the sunset. "The above description," says Byron in a note, "may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or an Italian sky; yet it is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth), as contemplated in one of many rides along the banks of the Brenta, near La Mira." La Mira, on the Brenta, is about six miles from where the river enters the lagoon opposite Venice. Byron spent the summers of 1817 and 1819 here. The student may compare this passage with Shelley's description of a Venetian sunset which he saw while riding with Byron: *Julian and Maddalo*.

**247. Rhaetian hill.** The Rhaetian Alps, northwest of Venice. This vast image is one of the subtle descriptions of which Byron was a master.

**259. Dies like the dolphin.** The "coryphene" of the Mediterranean sea, which, when dying, is resplendant with colors.

**262. Arqua.** Arqua del Monte, in the Euganean Hills, twelve

miles southwest of Padua, where Petrarch the Italian poet lived after being exiled from Florence, and where his tomb, a sarcophagus resting on pillars of red marble, stands in front of the village church.

**264. Laura's lover.** Francis Petrarch (1304-1374) was the greatest Italian lyric poet. Laura was a French woman of Avignon upon whom Petrarch bestowed his love and made her the theme of his sonnets. Petrarch, with Dante and Boccaccio, raised the Italian language to its highest literary fame.

**269. Watering the tree.** Petrarch, who was fond of word play, often united the name of Laura with the laurel—the emblem of fame.

**298. demons.** "The struggle is full as likely to be with demons as with our better thoughts. Satan chose the wilderness for the temptation of our Savior. And our unsullied John Locke (an English philosopher) preferred the presence of a child to complete solitude."—BYRON.

**307. Ferrara.** A city south of Padua on the way to Florence, which was long ruled by the family of Este.

**314. those who wore.** Ariosto and Tasso, the Italian poets who followed Dante and Petrarch.

**316. Tasso.** Alfonse II of Este was at first the patron of Tasso, but later imprisoned the poet, according to the legend, because Tasso had loved the Duke's sister.

**339. Cruscan quire.** The Academy della Crusca of Florence was a literary society, whose chief purpose was to winnow the Italian language—separating the chaff from the wheat. Byron refers to the society's condemning Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*.

**340. Boileau.** An eighteenth century French critic who censured the taste of his time for preferring the tinsel of Tasso to the pure gold of Vergil.

**354. Bards of Hell and Chivalry.** Dante and Ariosto. Dante's great poem, *The Divine Comedy*, tells the story of Dante's ascent from Hell through Purgatory to Heaven. Ariosto's poem, *Orlando Furioso*, recounts the events of an imaginary war between the Franks and the Spanish Muslims in the ninth century. Byron takes the opportunity to pay a compliment to Sir Walter Scott.

**361. The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust,** etc. "Before the remains of Tasso were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning and a crown of iron laurels melted away."—HOBHOUSE. Laurel was supposed to be protected from lightning.

**370. Italia.** This stanza and the one following are, with few alterations, according to Byron, a translation from a patriotic sonnet by Filicaja, a seventeenth century Italian poet.

**388. Wandering in youth.** Byron tells of these wanderings in Greece in Canto II of *Childe Harold*.

**389. Roman friend.** "The celebrated letter of Servius Sulpicius to Cicero, on the death of his daughter, describes as it then was, and now is, a path which I often traced in Greece, both by sea and land, in different journeys and voyages:—'On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from Algina towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospect of the countries around me: Algina was behind, Megara before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns, once famous and flourishing, now lie overturned and buried in their ruins. Upon this sight, I could not but think presently within myself, Alas! how do we poor mortals fret and vex ourselves if any of our friends happen to die or be killed, whose life is yet so short, when the carcasses of so many noble cities lie here exposed before me in one view.'—See Middleton's *Cicero*, 1823, vol. ii, p. 144." (Byron's Note.)

**425. Etrurian Athens.** As Athens was once the home of the arts, so now is Florence on the Arno.

**432. buried Learning rose, etc.** The Renaissance, or rebirth of literature and other fine arts, had its origin in the newly awakened interest in the ancient culture of Greece and Rome. This is often dated from the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which sent Greek scholars and manuscripts to Italy. The Renaissance reached its height in Italy in the sixteenth century.

**433. the Goddess loves in stone.** The Venus de Medici in the Uffizi gallery in Florence.

**450. Dardan Shepherd's prize.** Paris, the son of Priam, King of Troy, who gave Venus the prize for beauty in preference to Juno or Minerva.

**452. Anchises.** He was "more deeply blest" because Venus appeared to him as his wife, the mother of his son Æneas.

**454. Lord of War.** Mars, the Roman war-god, the lover of Venus.

**478. Santa Croce.** A Florentine church built in 1294, containing, as Byron said, "much illustrious nothing," i.e., the remains of many great men. He also refers to it as the Westminster Abbey of Italy.

**484. Angelo's.** Michael Angelo Buonarroti (1474-1563), one of Italy's greatest geniuses, great alike for his painting, sculpture and architecture.

**Alfieri.** (1749-1803.) Of him Byron says, "Alfieri is the great name of this age. His memory is the more dear to them because he is the bard of freedom; and because, as such, his tragedies can receive no countenance from any of their sovereigns." As a

matter of truth, he ranks far below the other three. Between his life and Byron's are many similarities.

**485. starry Galileo.** (1564-1642.) The founder of modern astronomy and the inventor of the telescope. Because he declared the earth revolved about the sun he was persecuted by the Inquisition, hence "his woes."

**486. Machiavelli.** A historical and political writer of the sixteenth century.

**487. elements.** Fire, air, earth and water from which the ancient Greeks and Romans supposed all to have been made.

**495. Canova.** A Venetian sculptor (died 1822) immensely popular in his day.

**496. Etruscan three.** Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, "The Bard of Prose," were all of Tuscan birth. Dante "sleeps afar" at Ravenna, where he died in exile in 1321, after the downfall of his party, the Whites, in Florence. Since Byron's day a beautiful cenotaph has been erected to Dante's memory in Florence, but all attempts to have his remains returned there have been in vain.

**498. The Bard of Prose.** Boccaccio of Certaldo (1313-1375), was the author of the *Decameron*, a gracefully united series of tales. Boccaccio satirized the monks and the abuses of the church so keenly that according to Byron, "The hyæna bigots tore up his tombstone and ejected it from the holy precincts."

**506. Scipio Africanus Major,** dissatisfied with the treatment accorded him at Rome, went into voluntary exile at Liturnum on the coast, where he died in 183 B.C.

**511. Petrarch's laureate brow.** He was crowned with laurel at Rome in 1341 for his poem on Africa.

**525. Cæsar's pageant.** In the reign of Tiberius, in the year 22 A.D., occurred the funeral of Junia, the wife of Cassius, and sister of Brutus. The images of these two historic men were omitted from the procession on account of the part they had played in the death of Julius Cæsar. The remark of Tacitus, "They were conspicuous by their absence," has become a common phrase.

**529. Arqua.** In 1650 Petrarch's grave at Arqua was rifled by some Venetian robbers, who later were banished from the state for their act.

**532. pyramid.** This refers to the splendid chapel in the church of San Lorenzo erected as a memorial to the Medici, the merchant dukes of Florence.

**542. Arno's dome of Art.** Probably a reference to the Uffizi Gallery, one of the richest storehouses of art in the world.

**551. Thrasimene.** In 218 B.C. Hannibal here, between the hills and the lake annihilated the Roman army under the Consul Fla-



minius. Of this, Livy in Book XXII, Chapter 5, says, "such was the animosity on both sides that an earthquake which partly destroyed many Italian cities, turned rapid streams, poured back rivers from the sea, and even tore down mountains, failed to be felt by any of them."

568. Note the figure in Stanza LXIV. Earth was the vessel bearing them unmindful of its motion, to eternity. After the picture of violence note the calm contrast of Stanza LXV.

586. *Clitumnus*, a northern branch of the Tiber. Pliny has a beautiful description of it and there are Macaulay's familiar lines,

"Unwatched along Clitumnus,  
Grazes the milk-white steer."

On its shore, between Foligno and Spoleto, is a small but beautifully constructed temple of white marble. The whole scene is famous for its beauty.

613. **The roar of waters.** This is the waterfall of Terni on the Velino, which flows into the Nar, itself a tributary of the Tiber. "It is," says Byron, "worth all the cascades and torrents of Switzerland put together."

620. **Phlegethon**, from the Greek, "the burning, boiling river of Hell." "The fall looks so much like 'the hell of waters' that Addison thought the descent alluded to by the gulf in which Alecto plunged into the Infernal regions." (Byron's Note.)

640. **Horribly beautiful.** An oxymoron, or the placing of contradictory terms in juxtaposition.

642. **An Iris sits.** "It is exactly like a rainbow come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it; this effect lasts till noon." (Byron's Note.)

649. **woody Apennine.** This chain of mountains is an offshoot of the Maritime Alps, hence "infant" and "parents."

653. **lauwine.** See line 106. Here wrongly used with a plural verb, the right form being *Lauwinen*.

654. **Jungfrau**, or virgin, a lofty mountain in the Bernese Alps. In Byron's time it was really a virgin mountain, for its summit had never been touched by man, but since 1812 its "never-trodden snow" has felt the feet of many mountain climbers.

656. **Mont Blanc**, or White Mountain, so called from the snow and glaciers visible on its summits. It is in the Savoyard Alps and rises to a height of 15,782 feet.

657. **Chimari.** Mountains on the sea coast of Epirus. Their ancient Greek name, *Acroceraunian*, means *thunder peaks*.

662. **Ida, Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas.** Consult an atlas or geographical gazetteer. For what is each of these mountains famous?

**665. Soracte**, now called San Oreste, is an isolated mountain north of Rome. Although only 2260 feet high, it is conspicuous from many points in the city. The sight of it brings back to Byron his schoolday struggles with the Latin poet Horace, who wrote of the Snow on Soracte, as a sign of a severe winter. "I wish to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed, by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish, or to reason upon." (From Byron's Note.)

**695. The orphans of the heart.** Why does Byron apply this title to himself?

**703. Niobe of nations.** A queen of Grecian mythology, who through boasting of her twelve children, brought about their destruction by a jealous goddess. So Rome has lost all her dependent states.

**707. Scipios' tomb.** In 1780 the family tomb of the Scipios was discovered near the Appian Way. The bones were carried off, but its ancient inscriptions are now in the Vatican.

**715. up the steep.** This is the carriage road up the Capitoline Hill, ascended by victorious generals in their triumphal cars.

**721-2. her, Night's daughter.** These parenthetical words confuse the figure. In our efforts to trace the ancient monuments we are in a complete darkness, that has long wrapt and still wraps everything: a darkness due to the long neglect of the ages and to ignorance.

**728. Eureka..** The Greek for "I have found it," cried by Archimedes after suddenly solving the difficult problem of testing the purity of the gold in Hiero's crown.

**Stanza LXXXII.** This stanza recalls many events of ancient Rome: its 326 triumphs; Brutus, more famous than conquerors through the killing of Cæsar; the voice of M. Tullius Cicero; the poet Vergil and the historian Livy—contemporaries both of Augustus Cæsar.

**740. Sylla.** Lucius Cornelius Sulla, called the Fortunate. During his conquest of Asia Minor, he was declared the public enemy of Rome. On his return, in 79 B.C., he conquered his opponents and then laid down the dictatorship.

**758. Cromwell.** Fine vigorous lines referring to Cromwell's dismissal of the Long Parliament and his leadership in the execution of Charles I. in 1649.

**763.** "On the 3d of September (1650) Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar; a year afterwards he obtained his 'crowning mercy' of Worcester; and a few years after (1658) on the same day, which

he had ever esteemed the most fortunate for him, died." (Byron's Note.)

**775. dread statue.** The statue of Pompey, possibly the one now at the Spada Palace at Rome.

"Even at the base of Pompey's statue,  
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell."

*Julius Cæsar*, III, ii, 188.

**781. Nemesis.** The goddess of punishment and retribution. Cf. Stanza CXXXII.

**784. nurse of Rome.** The bronze "wolf of the Capitol" in the Place of the Conservatori at Rome, traditionally identified with the statue struck by lightning B.C. 65. Cf. Cicero's third Catiline oration, Chap. VIII.

**795-797.** Men of later times have fought and bled in imitation of Roman arms, "the things they fear'd."

**800. one vain man.** Napoleon, who was then at St. Helena.

**809. Alcides.** When Cæsar was in Egypt, B.C. 48, he became completely captivated by Cleopatra. In this he reminds Byron of Alcides (Hercules), who became the slave of Omphale, Queen of Lydia, and spun wool at her feet.

**811. came and saw and conquered!** The famous "*veni, vidi, vici*," Cæsar's announcement of his success after the battle of Zela, B.C. 47. In *As you Like It*, V, ii, 25, Shakespeare refers to it as "Cæsar's thrasonical brag."

Stanzas XCII-XCVIII should be considered together. Here Byron moralizes on the conditions of the European nations under the tyrannical governments of his day. The climax is reached in Stanza XCVIII in a glorious tribute to liberty. It is easy to see how Byron with such a trumpet-call to freedom tremendously influenced and inspired the nations of the continent in their struggles for political freedom during the generation after the Napoleonic Wars.

**858. Columbia.** The poetical and altogether fitting name for America, where it stands for independence and self-government.

**859. Pallas.** Pallas Athena is fabled to have sprung fully armed from the brain of Zeus.

**865. France.** Note the powerful and pitifully true figure opening this stanza.

**866. Saturnalia.** A Roman feast in mid-December, noted for its license and debauchery.

**871. the base pageant.** The Congress of Vienna, the Holy Alliance (for the protection of absolute monarchy) and the second treaty of Paris, were all in 1815.

**Stanza XCIX.** In an abrupt change the poet takes us to the

round tower and strong fortress, on the Appian Way, two miles beyond the walls of Rome. The fortress is known as the tomb of Cælia Metella, the wife of Marcus Crassus, consul of Rome in 55 B.C.

**904. Cornelia**, "The Mother of the Gracchi," and sister of Scipio.

**905. Egypt's graceful queen**: Cleopatra.

**914. prophetic of the doom**. Byron refers to "Whom the Gods love die young."

**917. Hesperus**. Evening star, prophetic of night.

**927. his love or pride!** One of Byron's cynical touches so often apparent in his poems. Crassus was famous for his wealth.

**Stanzas CIV-CV**. In these stanzas Byron takes the reader back again to himself and his own misguided life.

**951. Palatine**. One of the seven hills of Rome. The poet's description is true of his day—but the hill now is largely excavated and discloses six palaces.

**963. Imperial Mount**. Augustus Cæsar lived here.

**Stanza CVIII**. The course of evolution to greatness and decay was true of Rome, Athens and other ancient empires.

**969. Hath but one page**, i.e., History repeats itself.

**975. Thou pendulum**. This line has become a classic metaphor.

**978. pyramid of empires . . . Glory's gewgaws**. The Palatine Hill with its "golden roofs, studded with gems," stood as the very acme of supremacy, tyranny and outward splendor.

**983. nameless column**. This very imposing column, standing 54 feet high, in the Forum, is now known to be the pillar dedicated to Phocas, the tyrannical Emperor of Byzantium, 602-610 A.D.

**987. Titus**. Arch of Titus, in memory of the fall of Jerusalem.

**Trajan**. The ashes of Trajan were removed from his pillar by Pope Sixtus V. and a statue of the Apostle Peter was placed on the column. In a similar manner, a statue of St. Paul was placed on the column of Marcus Aurelius.

**997. unstained with household blood**, refers to Alexander's murder of his friend Clitus in a drunken quarrel.

**999. Trajan's name**. "Trajan was proverbially the best of the Roman princes, and it would be easier to find a sovereign uniting exactly the opposite characteristics than one possessed of all the happy qualities ascribed to this Emperor." (Byron's Note.)

**1000. rock of triumph**. Capitoline Hill, where the triumphal processions ended.

**1002. Tarpeian**. The rock from which traitors were hurled.

**1007. Forum**. There were several forums or market places in Rome. The one here referred to was at the foot of the Capitoline

Hill. It was the center of city life and the scene of many factional struggles.

**1018. latest tribune.** Rienzi, a private citizen, who led an insurrection against the nobles. He was made Tribune in 1347 A.D. See Lytton's *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes*.

**1027. Egeria.** The Nymph whom Numa, the ancient Roman law-giver, is fabled to have loved and who advised him in regard to his public conduct.

**1031. nympholepsy.** The sight of a nymph was supposed to fill the beholder with an ecstatic longing for an unattainable ideal.

**1036. thy fountain.** This grotto of Egeria is a mile and a half from Rome, on the Appian Way. Here the nymph was supposed to meet her lover.

**1069. Expel the venom and not blunt the dart.** "Remove the poison of satiety without taking off the edge of enjoyment." Of tempered, Epicurean enjoyment Byron knew nothing.

**1081.** In the following stanzas (CXXI, CXXII, CXXIII) Byron indicates that like the artist's ideal, so the human ideal is never reached. Thinking we have found it, charm after charm unwinds like a robe and discloses our idolized object human and imperfect.

**1105. Reaping the whirlwind.** *Hosea* VIII, 7. "They have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind."

**1109. unfound the boon.** An absolute construction. This entire passage is intense and pessimistic because of its personal note. Byron refers to his own experiences and unhappy marriage.

**1129. upas.** A fabled tree supposed to exude a poison fatal to all vegetation and life near it.

**1140. cabin'd.** From *Macbeth*, III, iv, 24.

"But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in  
To saucy doubts and fears."

**1143. couch.** A medical term for removing a cataract.

**Stanzas CXXVIII-CXXX.** Reflections on the Coliseum and its application to himself. Enumerate the places where the poet sees in Nature, or history, illustrations of his own life.

**1147. The Coliseum,** between the Palatine and Esquiline Hills, was an immense amphitheater completed in 80 A.D. by the Flavian dynasty and used for gladiatorial and spectacular shows.

**Stanza CXXX.** How does Byron think his wrongs can be adjusted?

**Stanzas CXXXI-CXXXVI.** These are personal stanzas in which Byron alludes to the wrongs done him, as he thinks, by his wife and by the public which took her part. As often, his personal passion calls forth the full display of his masterly art.

1179. *they.* His enemies.

1184. *Orestes* was pursued by the Furies, because, to avenge the murder of his father, he had dared to murder his mother.

1207. *Stanza CXXXV.* Between this and stanza CXXXVI., Byron in the MS. inserted the following:

"If to forgive be heaping coals of fire—  
As God hath spoken—on the heads of foes,  
Mine should be a volcano, and rise higher  
Than, o'er the Titans crushed, Olympus rose,  
Or Athos soars, or blazing Etna glows:—  
True, they who stung were creeping things; but what  
Than serpent's teeth inflicts with deadlier throes?  
The lion may be goaded by the gnat—  
Who seeks the slumberer's blood? The eagle? No, the bat."

1221. *Janus.* The God with two faces, who presided over the gates of war in Rome.

1234. *thou dread power.* Is it Time or Nemesis or what? Cf. Stanzas CXXX–CXXXII.

1250. *listed spot.* List, a place for games and tournaments.

*Stanza CXL.* Though not faultless in meter and rhyme, this is one of Byron's noblest stanzas. Matthew Arnold speaks of it as showing Byron's "strong deep sense of what is beautiful in human action and suffering."

1252. *Gladiator.* The statue, now called the "Dying Gaul," in the museum of the Capitol at Rome.

1266. *Dacian mother.* Dacia, the land north of the lower Danube, was the last to be conquered by Rome, and its warlike captives were forced to fight in the Roman games.

1274. *Roman millions' blame or praise.* "When one gladiator wounded another, he shouted, 'He has it,' 'Hoc habet,' or 'Habet.' The wounded combatant dropped his weapon, and, advancing to the edge of the arena, supplicated the spectators. If he had fought well, the people saved him, if otherwise, or as they happened to be inclined, they turned down their thumbs, and he was slain." (Hobhouse.)

1276. *My voice sounds much.* A very effectual contrast to the roar of the buzzing nations. It has been estimated that the Colosseum could seat 87,000 persons.

1279. *from its mass.* The amphitheater was used as a quarry in the Middle Ages, and many Roman buildings were made from its spoils.

1288. *But when the rising moon.* Another example of Byron's swift, spontaneous power in description. Ruskin says of him, "Byron wrote as easily as the hawk flies, and as clearly as the lake

reflects, the exact truth in the precisely narrowest terms; not only the exact truth, but the most central and useful one."

**1293. Cæsar's head.** A poor, grating simile. "Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by that decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald." (Byron's Note.) For a similar description of the Coliseum, see *Manfred*, III, iv, 10 ff.

**1297. While stands the Coliseum.** "This is quoted [from Bede] in [Gibbons's] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, as a proof that the Coliseum was entire, when seen by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims at the end of the seventh, or the beginning of the eighth, century." (Byron's Note.)

The original is: "Quamdiu stabit Coliseus, stabit et Roma; quando cadet Coliseus, cadet Roma; quando cadet Roma, cadet et mundus."

**Stanza CXLVI.** Note the fine climax, not only in the first line, but in the stanza as a whole. The Pantheon, erected in 27 B.C. by Agrippa, signifies a temple for all gods. It is a circular building, its sole aperture being the window in the top of its dome. In 610 A.D. it was made a Christian Church under the name of Santa Maria Rotonda, and is to-day in a remarkable state of preservation.

**1321. altars for their beads.** Place for prayer.

**1323. honour'd forms.** Refers to the busts of Raphael and other great men, which were placed there.

**Stanzas CXLVIII-CLI.** Another of the best known passages in *Childe Harold*, where Byron invests a beautiful story with exquisite realism and fine feeling. The story, which is common to many countries, is here connected with a cell attached to the church of St. Nicolo in Carcere, called "Caritas Romana." It tells of a daughter, who to preserve the life of her imprisoned father, nourished him with her own milk. Festus and Pliny both tell the story.

**1336. Blest into mother.** One of Byron's best phrases. He was passionately fond of children.

**1348. Great Nature's Nile.** Nile, "the Creator of Egypt," is the source of agricultural life in the country through which it flows.

**1351. The starry fable of the milky way.** The Greek myth of the origin of the milky way was that Hercules after his birth was put to the breast of the sleeping Hera (Juno), that he might drink of divinity. But on awaking she pushed him away and the milk thus spilled became the milky way.

**1360. Mole.** The circular mausoleum built for Hadrian and later, in 428 A.D., made into a fortress. It is now called the castle of St. Angelo and is connected by a passage to the Vatican.

**1361. Imperial mimic.** The structure resembles the pyramids in size and solidity only.

**1363. travelled phantasy.** Hadrian had traveled widely. It is probable, however, that his successor and not he himself is responsible for this tomb.

**1369. dome.** The cathedral of St. Peter's, on the left bank of the Tiber. Michael Angelo was one of its architects. A period of 120 years was covered in its building. Explain how the poet makes us feel its vastness.

**1370. Diana's marvel.** The temple of Diana, or Artemis, at Ephesus, one-half the size of St. Peter's, was anciently considered one of the seven wonders of the world.

**1375. Sophia's bright roofs.** The church of Santa Sophia in Constantinople was made into a mosque by the Turks.

**1381. Zion's desolation.** The temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem on Mt. Zion. It was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman general, Titus.

**1386. ark.** The ark of the covenant: the coffer containing the Jewish laws.

**1387. its grandeur overwhelms thee not.** This is true, and is due to the perfect proportions, "musical immensities," and to the lack of anything to give scale.

**1433. Laocoon.** This Trojan, because he sympathized with the Greeks and opposed the introduction of the horse into Troy, was destroyed with his two sons by serpents, sent by the avenging gods. The statue representing the story was dug up on the Esquiline Hill in 1506 and is now in the Vatican. The group expresses the very acme of physical and mental torture and is the basis of a treatise on art by Lessing. Lessing's work, *Laocoön*, published in 1766, has now become more of a classic than the sculpture itself.

The pupil will do well to compare this description with that of the gladiator, as illustrating Byron's peculiar power of visualizing phases of human life and feelings.

**1441. Lord of the unerring bow.** Apollo Belvidere. He was god of poetry and song as well as of the sun. The statue was discovered at the end of the fifteenth century at Antium. Its left hand, then missing, was restored by an artist of the school of Michael Angelo and was made to hold a bow. It is now believed that the hand originally held an ægis.

**1459. Prometheus stole from Heaven.** According to one version, Prometheus, after fashioning men from clay, stole fire from Heaven and gave it to them as the breath of life. For this he was punished with terrible tortures. Byron here says the theft was repaid by the sculptor of the Apollo, who, aflame with genius, fash-



ioned the epitome of beauty, "an eternal glory," beyond human thought.

**1460. The fire which we endure.** Our higher nature the poet thinks is the source of all our pain.

**1468. Pilgrim of my song.** Childe Harold, who has not been mentioned since Canto 3, Stanza LV.

**1495. from the abyss.** Death. Stanzas CLXVII-CLXXII refer to the death of Princess Charlotte from childbirth in 1817, the shock of which threw England into universal mourning. She was the only daughter of the Prince Regent, later George IV. She had married in 1816, Leopold, subsequently King of Belgium. As the future Queen of England, as a great and beloved woman the British nation had looked forward to her reign as an era of prosperity. Southey, Campbell, Montgomery and several others wrote eulogies upon her death, but only Byron's has lived.

**1549. Nemi.** Byron, now near to the end of his poem, takes the reader to the Alban Mountain, now called Monte Cavo, from which place he suggests the beautiful panorama which unrolls before the eye. First to the south is Nemi, a crater lake.

"The lake of Nemi lies in a very deep bottom, so surrounded on all sides with mountains and groves that the surface of it is never ruffled with the least breath of wind, which, perhaps together with the clearness of the water, gave it formerly the name of Diana's Looking Glass, 'speculumque Dianæ.'" (Byron's Note.)

**1558. Albano.** Another, and larger crater lake, lying at the right of Nemi.

**1559. and afar.** To the northwest.

**1561. Epic war.** Vergil's *Æneid*, which describes the Epic war, begins, "Arma virumque cano."

**1562. re-ascending star.** The descendants of *Æneid* became rulers.

**1564. Tully reposed.** At Tusculum, Cicero's country estate.

**1566. Sabine Farm.** The home of Horace the poet.

**1567. Pilgrim's shrine.** Childe Harold has reached the end of his wanderings.

**1574. Cape's rock.** Gibraltar. Byron must mean the last time he and Childe Harold saw it together, for he had seen it on his return to England in 1811.

**1576. blue Symplegades.** Two small rocky islands near the Euxine entrance to the Bosphorus. The name means "clasping islands," because at one time they were supposed to be floating.

**Stanza CLXXVII.** The climax of his poem and of his poetic powers is now reached in the following sweeping inspiring stanzas.

**1620. there let him lay.** A British provincialism and inexcus-

ably bad English, for which the poet has been roundly criticised. It is probably not a case of ignorance, but of "the careless and negligent ease of a man of quality."

**Stanza CLXXXI.** This is regarded by some critics as Byron's best stanza. Why?

**1629. Armada's pride.** The Spanish Armada was destroyed in a tempest.

**spoils of Trafalgar.** The vessels captured at Trafalgar were practically all destroyed by a storm following the battle.

**1648. my joy.** Byron was an excellent swimmer and was very proud of his ability. He once swam across the Hellespont.

**1672. sandal-shoon and scallop-shell.** Badges of a pilgrim. Shoon is plural for shoe. The scallop-shells are found in the Holy Land, and were marks of travel over the sea.

#### THE PRISONER OF CHILLON. [Page 64.]

THE Prisoner of Chillon was written in Switzerland in 1816. During a trip with Mr. Hobhouse, along the shore of the Lake Geneva, the poet was detained, by stress of weather, for two days (June 26, 27), at the little port town of Ouchy, and there wrote the poem; "thereby," as Moore says, "adding one more deathless association to the already immortalized locality of the lake."

"The château de Chillon is situated between Clarens and Ville-neuve, which last is at one (the east) extremity of the Lake of Geneva. On its left are the entrances of the Rhone, and opposite are the heights of Meillerie and the range of Alps above Boveret and St. Gingo. Near it, on a hill behind, is a torrent: below it, washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of 800 feet, French measure; within are a range of dungeons, in which the early reformers and subsequently prisoners of state, were confined. Across one of the vaults is a beam black with age, on which we were informed that the condemned were formerly executed. In the cells are seven pillars, or rather eight, one being half merged in the wall; in some of these are rings for the fetters and the fettered: in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces. He was confined here several years. . . . The château is large, and seen along the lake from a great distance. The walls are white."—BYRON.

Chillon covers an isolated rock on the edge of the lake, and is a picturesque combination of semicircular and square towers grouped about a higher central tower. It was probably built during the first quarter of the twelfth century and has served in turn as a fortress, a prison, and an arsenal, and is to-day one of the points of special interest to the tourists on the continent.

Francois de Bonnivard, the Swiss patriot, politician, author, and prelate, was born at Seysse, near Geneva, 1496; died at Geneva, 1570. In 1518, he was instrumental in effecting an alliance between Geneva and other Swiss cities against the Duke of Savoy, for which he was imprisoned twenty months. On his release, however, he continued his efforts for Swiss freedom, and in 1530 was again arrested by the Duke, and confined in Chillon, where he was placed in a subterranean dungeon, and, local tradition says, chained to a pillar. He was liberated (1536) at the capture of the castle by the Bernese forces, and lived to honored old age among the people in whose service he had suffered so greatly. As will be seen, there is little in common between the historical Bonnivard and the hero of the poem. Indeed, as Byron says: "When the foregoing poem (*The Prisoner of Chillon*) was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavored to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and virtues." Merely a sight of the dungeon was sufficient to set the poet's powerful imagination to work.

"The Prisoner of Chillon," says an eminent critic, "brings before us in a few words the condition of a hopeless bondage. The account of the prisoner himself and of the lingering deaths of his brothers; the first frenzy of the survivor and the desolation which succeeds it; the bird's song breaking on the night of his solitude; his growing enamored of despair and regaining his freedom with a sigh, are all strokes of a master hand."

The Sonnet on Chillon was written some time after the *Prisoner of Chillon*, and after the poet had learned the story of Bonnivard. In the first draught, the sonnet opened thus:

"Beloved Goddess of the chainless mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,  
Thy palace is within the Freeman's heart,  
Whose soul the love of thee alone can bind;  
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—  
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
Thy joy is with them still, and unconfined,  
Their country conquers with their martyrdom."

1-4. **My hair is gray**, etc. Byron has this note: "Ludovic and others. The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's the wife of Louis the Sixteenth, though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have the same effect: to such, and not to fear, this change in hers, was to be attributed.

6. **But rusted with a vile repose**. Explain the use of the word *rusted*. In the original MS. the line read:

"But with the inward waste of grief."

11. But this was for my father's faith. Can you find any good reasons for believing the father was a Protestant? The use of *this*, instead of *it*, illustrates the author's occasional slip in construction—probably due to his rapid composition.

20. Proud of Persecution's rage. The MS. read:

"Braving rapcours-chains and rage."

22. sealed. Confirmed, ratified.

30. Dim with dull imprisoned ray. Murray, describing Chillon in his *Handbook of Switzerland*, says: "The dungeon of Bonnivard is airy and spacious, consisting of two aisles, almost like the crypt of a church. It is lighted by several windows, through which the sun's rays pass by reflection from the surface of the lake up to the roof, transmitting partly also the blue color of the water."

41. new day. Explain. What do we now see is the situation at the opening of the poem?

44. I cannot count them o'er. Cite other instances in literature where persons isolated have lost track of time.

57. The pure elements. Light and air.

63. Our voices took a dreary tone. A common experience to persons entombed or isolated. Cf. *Enoch Arden*, ll. 680-681.

"Muttering and mumbling idiot-like it seem'd,  
With inarticulate rage."

Also the Maroon in *Treasure Island*, whose voice sounded "hoarse and awkward like a rusty lock."

81. As to young eagles. Why eagles?

97. But not in chains to pine. *To pine* depends on *was formed*, l. 93.

101. it. Antecedent?

102. Those relics of a home. His two brothers.

107. Lake Leman. (Lake Geneva). Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, is one of the most beautiful lakes of Europe. It is forty-five miles long by eight and a half miles wide, and has an altitude of twelve hundred thirty feet. The Rhone traverses it from east to west.

108. A thousand feet. In his note, Byron says, "800 feet, French measure." The French foot is nearly an inch longer than the English foot.

111. snow white battlement. See Byron's description of the castle in the introductory notes to the poem.

112. Which round about the wave enthralls. *Wave* is the subject of *enthralls*. The inverted order of construction used here

is not uncommon in poetry. Cf. the oft-quoted example in Gray's *Elegy*:

"Awaits alike the inevitable hour."

*Hour* is the subject of *awaits*.

126. **nearer brother.** That is, nearer in age.

144. **But why delay the truth?—he died.** MS:

"But why withhold the blow?—he died."

148. **gnash.** Bite. The MS. read:

"To bite or break my bonds in twain."

152. **boon.** A favor: from the Latin *bonus*, good.

154. **it was a foolish thought.** Explain the use of the word *foolish*; also of *wrought*, in the following line.

172. **Yet.** Thus far, hitherto.

182, 183. **I've seen the sick,** etc. Cf. the death-bed scene of Count de Bœuf in *Ivanhoe*.

189. **And grieved for those he left behind.** "There is much delicacy," says Hales, "in this plural. By such a fanciful multiplying of the survivors the elder brother prevents self-intrusion; himself and his loneliness are, as it were, kept out of sight and forgotten."

215-218. **The last, the sole, the dearest link,** etc. "The gentle decay and gradual extinction of the youngest life is," says Jeffrey, "the most tender and beautiful passage in the poem."

230. **selfish death.** That is, a self-inflicted death; suicide.

231-250. **What next befell me then and there,** etc. This description of the prisoner's stupefaction, following his younger brother's death, is among the most admired and best known portions of the poem.

252. **It was the carol of a bird.** Note the poet's device for calling the prisoner out of his spell to a consciousness of his surrounding—a device common in literature. Cf. the use of the irishued serpents to break the Ancient Mariner's spell:

"A spring of love gushed from my heart;  
And I blessed them unaware."

The use of the word *forlorn*, in Keat's *Ode to the Nightingale*:

... in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self,"

and the use of the chimes and choral song in *Faust* to stay the hero's hand as he lifts the cup of poison to his lips:

"Sound on, ye hymns of heaven, so sweet and mild!  
My tears gush forth: The earth takes back her child."

**294. Lone as a solitary cloud.** Cf. Wordsworth's poem, *The Daffodils*, beginning:

"I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills."

**232-235. I saw them and they were the same.** From the beginning of time the hills and mountains have been used as symbolic of permanence and strength.

**335-336. On high—their wide long lake below,** etc. The original MS. read:

"I saw them with their lake below,  
And their three thousand year of snow."

For dimensions of the lake see note to line 107.

**336-337. And the blue Rhone,** etc. See the poet's note in introduction to the poem.

**339. White walled, distant town.** Villeneuve.

**341-350. And then there was a little isle,** etc. In a note to this passage the poet says: "Between the entrance of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees (I think not above three) and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view."

**387. In quiet we had learned to dwell.** Here follows in the MS.:

"Nor slew I of my subjects one—  
What sovereign {hath so little  
yet so much hath } done? "

**392. Regained my freedom,** etc. Sir Walter Scott, writing on the poem, says in part: "It will readily be allowed that this singular poem is more powerful than pleasing. The dungeon of Bonnivard is, like that of Vgilino, a subject too dismal for even the power of the painter or poet to counteract its horrors. It is the more disagreeable as affording human hope no anchor to rest upon, and describing the sufferer, though a man of talents and virtues, as altogether inert and powerless under his accumulated sufferings. Yet as a picture, however gloomy the coloring, it may rival any which Lord Byron has drawn; nor is it possible to read it without a sinking of the heart, corresponding with that which he describes the victim to have suffered."

## MAZEPPA. [Page 78.]

MAZEPPA was written in 1819, at Venice. In it Byron returned to his earlier form of verse: the rapid narrative style of Scott. Perhaps nowhere in literature can one find greater action, or more graphic descriptions, than in the lines detailing the Hetman's headlong ride and the incidents attendant thereon. M. Villemain, the eminent French critic, declares that, sublime in its substance and finishing with a joke, it is at once the master-piece and symbol of Byron.

An English reviewer of the day, writing for *Blackwood's Magazine*, says: "Mazeppa is a very fine and spirited sketch, of a very noble story, and is in every way worthy of its author. The story is a well known one; namely, that of the young Pole, who, being bound naked on the back of a wild horse, on account of an intrigue with the lady of a certain great noble of his country, was carried by his steed into the heart of the Ukraine, and being there picked up by some Cossacks, in a state apparently of utter hopelessness and exhaustion, recovered and lived to be long after the prince and leader of the nation among whom he had arrived in this extraordinary manner. Lord Byron has represented the strange and wild incidents of this adventure, as being related in a half serious, half sporting way, by Mazeppa himself, to no less a person than Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, in some of whose last campaigns the Cossack Hetman took a distinguished part. He tells it during the desolate bivouac of Charles and the few friends who fled with him toward Turkey, after the bloody overthrow of Pultowa. There is not a little of beauty and gracefulness in this way of setting the picture;—the age of Mazeppa—the calm, practiced indifference with which he now submits to the worst of fortune's deeds—the heroic, unthinking coldness of the royal madman to whom he speaks—the dreary and perilous accompaniments of the scene around the speaker and the audience—all contribute to throw a very striking charm both of preparation and of contrast over the wild story of the Hetman. Nothing can be more beautiful, in like manner, than the account of love—the guilty love—the fruits of which had been so miraculous."

Ivan Mazeppa (1644-1709), the hero of the poem, was the descendant of a poor but noble Polish family. It was while a page at the court of John Casimir, King of Poland, that his intrigue with the nobleman's wife occurred, with the subsequent punishment. After rising to the leadership among the Cossacks (1687), as narrated, he gained the favor of Peter the Great, who gave him the title of Prince of Ukraine. Later he entered into unsuccessful conspiracies with

the princes of Poland, and afterward Charles XII, to the end of gaining independence from Russia. He is said to have committed suicide by poison (1709) following Charles's overthrow at Pultowa.

**1. Pultowa or Poltava.** The capital of the province of Pultowa, in southwestern Russia. Near it the Russians (about 70,000), under Peter the Great, defeated the Swedes (about 25,000) under Charles XII, June 27, 1709. The battle marks the fall of Charles's power and the beginning of Russia as a factor in the affairs of Europe.

**2. the royal Swede.** Charles XII, known in history as the "Madman of the North." His career, which was meteoric and spectacular, marks him as the greatest general of his time and one of the ablest statesmen. In an attempt to carry out the plan of Gustavus Adolphus to weld the land about the Baltic Sea into a vast Swedish empire, he invaded and conquered Denmark (1700); ignominiously defeated the Russian forces at Narva, November 30th of the same year; and overthrew the Saxons and Poles (1701-1706). In 1708 he invaded Russia. Foiled in his attempt to capture Moscow, he suddenly turned south into the Ukraine district and laid siege to Poltava. Peter marched to the city's relief, and in the battle before its walls, virtually annihilated the Swedish army. Escaping with a few followers, Charles found an asylum in Turkey, where he remained six years. In 1714 he returned north, and four years later was killed in battle at Frederikshald, Norway. It has been said of him that he was an old Norse Sea King born ten centuries after his time. He reigned from 1697 to 1718.

**7. the triumphant Czar.** Peter Alexeievitch (1672-1725), surnamed the Great: one of Russia's ablest rulers. He enlarged the borders of Russia, introduced western European civilization among his people, founded St. Petersburg, and placed the national government on a more liberal but firmer basis. Through his statesmanship Russia became a recognized power among the nations. He reigned from 1690 to 1725.

**8. Moscow.** The former capital of Russia and her chief commercial and manufacturing center of to-day. The city has fallen into the hands of the enemies repeatedly, and several times been destroyed by fire, the last time in September, 1812, at the time of its occupation by the French. Napoleon's army, numbered upward of half a million men, half of whom perished in the Russian snows, or at the hands of the Cossacks.

**11. The wounded Charles was taught to fly.** See note to line 2.

**23. Gieba.** One of Charles's commanders. Note the devotion of the King's subjects in the hour of his misfortune.

**46. of a day.** That is, June 27, 1799, the day of the battle of Poltava.



56. **The Ukraine's hetman.** Here, of course, Mazeppa. *Ukraine*, a region of southern Russia, of vague boundaries (lying chiefly in the middle Dneiper valley), was long an object of contention between Russia and Poland. *Hetman*, the title of the chief or general of the Cossacks. The title Chief Hetman is now held by the heir apparent to the throne of Russia.

71. **Tartar-like.** Tartars: hardy, nomadic tribes of Central and Western Asia, noted for their ferocity and endurance. The expression, "Caught a Tartar," has passed into proverb.

77. **would follow like a fawn.** Cf. Arnold's *Sohrab and Rostum*, ll. 270-271:

" . . . and Ruksh, his horse,  
Follow'd like a faithful hound at heel."

103-104. **Since Alexander's days, etc.** Alexander the Great (B.C. 356-323), the celebrated Macedonian conqueror and statesman. His favorite steed, Bucephalus, whom only his master could mount, and which accompanied him on his conquests, was buried with great pomp on the banks of the Hydaspes, in Northwestern India.

105. **Scythia.** A name of varying meaning; a region of Southern Russia and Roumania. The Scythians were a wild, barbaric people much feared by their neighbor nations.

116. **Borysthenes.** An ancient name of the river Dneiper, in Southwestern Russia.

129. **John Casimir.** One of the line of Polish kings of that name.

135. **Warsaw.** The capital of Russian Poland.

147. **He was the Polish Solomon.** Explain the allusion.

154. **Thyrsis.** A name for shepherds in Greek pastoral poetry.

155. **Palatine.** One invested with royal privileges and rights.

157. **Rich as salt or silver mine.** One should have in mind in this connection that the wealth of Poland consists largely in salt mines.

161. **beneath the throne.** That is, not actually on the throne.

163. **And o'er his pedigree would pore.** Read Browning's *My Last Duchess*, in connection with this passage.

202. **Theresa.** The palatine's wife.

208, 209. **She had the Asiatic eye, etc.** Dark, languid. Cf. *Childe Harold*, Canto III, Stanza XCLII.

"Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
Of a dark eye in woman."

See also Canto III, Stanza LIX, *Childe Harold*.

219. **As though it were a joy to die.** The line originally read:

"Until it proves a joy to die."

269, 270. . . . though not, etc. The MS. reads:

". . . but not  
For that which we had both forgot."

285. I shorten all my joy or pain. That is, passes over his love affair briefly.

290. I am or rather was a prince. See note on Mazeppa, in introduction to poem.

313-317. I would have given, etc. That is, if he could lawfully and honorably have had this woman as wife.

321. The devil—I'm loth to do him wrong. What familiar saying does this suggest to you? Explain the lines following concerning the so-called saint.

329. Cap-à-pie. French: from head to foot. The poet repeats the thought in the remainder of the line.

331. 'Twas neither his castle. Antecedent of *it* and *his*?

336. 'Scutcheon. Escutcheon. In heraldry, the shield on which the coat of arms of a family is represented.

354. 'Sdeath! An oath; contraction for *God's death*.

358. Bring forth the horse! Note the abrupt manner in which the incident of the Hetman's wild ride is introduced. Is there anything suggestive in this?

360. A Tartar. See note to line 71.

428. Northern light. Aurora-Borealis.

437. Spahi. Irregular Turkish cavalry.

506. At bay, etc. "Nothing," says the critic in *Blackwood's*, "can be grander than the sweep and torrent of the horse's speed and the slow, unwearied, inflexible pursuit of the wolves."

520. A woman piqued. One gets repeated glimpses of the poet's attitude toward the opposite sex in this poem. (See line 138.)

539-561. The earth gave way, the skies rolled round, etc. This passage, describing the Hetman's fainting, is among the best known of the poem.

578. And thickened, as it were, with glass. "For now we see through a glass darkly." 1 *Corinthians*, xiii: 12.

599, 600. Cf. *The Ancient Mariner*, Part V, Stanza iv:

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed ghost."

607. And onward, onward, onward. But little play of imagination is required to catch the galloping motion of the courser in this line. Cf. Browning's *How We Brought the Good News*.

613. As rose the moon upon my right. What direction was the Hetman's course?

"The sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he," etc.

*Ancient Mariner*, Part I, stanza vii.

619. *ignis-fatuus*. A flame-like meteor composed of gases from decaying animal matter, which floats about in the air and seems to recede as one approaches it. The term is applied to anything deceptive or fanciful.

636. *Starkly*. Stiffly, strongly.

649, 650. The MS. has:—

"Rose crimson and forbade the stars  
To sparkle in their radiant cars."

In ancient mythology the heavenly bodies were represented as being carried across the sky in elaborate conveyances called cars.

656. What booted it. What good did it do?

657-667. . . . Man nor brute, etc. Literature has few such pictures of utter desolation and loneliness. Cf. *The Ancient Mariner*, Part IV, Stanza iii:

"Alone, alone all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide, wide sea!"

662. Insects shrill, small horn. That is, the drone or hum of insects in flight.

665. *Werst*. A Russian measure of distance; [about two-thirds of an English mile.

724-735. To that which our foreboding years. Death. Cf. Hamlet's soliloquy. Act III, Scene i.

752. *Paradise*. Eden. Explain the allusion to the *tree* in this line.

759. *Guerdon*. Reward, recompense.

763. I know no more. Point out other examples of a change in tense to the historic present. Is anything gained by its use?

785. *fixed*. That is, engaged the whole attention.

789. I woke.—Where was I? The looked-for and yet, in a sense, unprepared-for transitions throughout the poem, add greatly to its charm.

806. From adding to the vulture's feast. Why *adding* to the vulture's feast?

843. Since I became the Cossacks' guest. See introductory note to poem.

854. Let none despond, let none despair! Just why is this a very appropriate bit of philosophizing at this juncture?

857-859. Upon his Turkish bank, etc. Once safe across the Borysthènes, Charles and his followers would be on Turkish soil, and so free from their pursuers.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH  
YEAR.

[Page 106.]

"On the morning of the 22nd of January, his birthday the last my poor friend was ever fated to see—he came from his bedroom into the apartment where Colonel Stanhope and some others were assembled, and said, with a smile, 'You were complaining the other day that I never write any poetry now. This is my birthday, and I have just finished something which, I think, is better than what I usually write.' He then produced to them those beautiful stanzas, . . . affectionately associated with the closing scene of his life. . . . Taking into consideration, indeed, everything connected with these verses,—the last tender aspirations of a loving spirit which they breathe, the self-devotion to a noble cause which they so nobly express, and that consciousness of a near grave glimmering sadly through the whole,—there is, perhaps, no production within the range of mere human composition, round which the circumstances and feelings under which it was written cast so touching an interest."—Moore's *Life of Byron*.

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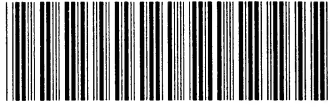
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